

THE COUNTERFEIT AND THE GENUINE



HOW TO SURVIVE THE CRISES

COUNTERFEITS
by
Ron Spear

**Bible quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.
NIV refers to the New International Version.**

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Pastor R. D. Spear

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INTRODUCTION

by Dr. Colin Standish

Hartland Institute, Rapidan, Virginia

We are living in a very dangerous complex age. In the political scene we see confusion. World leaders are desperately trying to solve the world's problems, only to see political chaos turned into more confusion.

The morality of our world is now measured by what you get away with—if you get caught it is immoral.

The world of economics is frightening. It seems the whole world stands ready to crash into the abyss.

Over our world hangs the nuclear clouds of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And the question in everyone's mind is 'will someone drop the hydrogen bomb?' Two nuclear giants face each other trying to beat each other in an arms race that can only bring us to Armageddon, the end of the world.

Our only hope to survive is in the promises of God in His Holy Word. But Christianity today is confused. Every wind of doctrine is blowing. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:14.

What is truth? One church teaches one thing, another teaches something else. One prays to Mary; others pray to Jesus. One baptizes by immersion; another sprinkles. The majority go to church on Sunday; some go to church on Saturday. Some believe you go to Heaven or Hell when you die; others say you sleep in the grave till Jesus comes.

What is the truth? This book written by my fellow minister Ron Spear will help you understand the truth for this time.

FORWARD

I have known the author of this book for many years, and it is with pleasure that I recommend to my fellow ministers and friends of the Laity the reading of this book.

"To the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

Dear friends put this book to the acid test of God's Word, for the Word clearly tells us "and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" John 8:32.

May God bless you as you read.

Pastor James Wolter
Ontario, California

1. DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?

Many people today believe in ghosts, haunted houses, voodoo and other phenomena from the spirit world. Ouija boards are best sellers in department stores. Gossip tabloids feature stories of haunted houses and of loved ones communicating with their departed dead. They report men and women being taken captive by visitors from outer space. Television has captured the minds of young and old alike with programs such as *Startrek* and *Bewitched*. There are movies that deal more specifically with the occult, as Hollywood productions brings millions of people to movie theaters. For many years the media influenced by Satan, has bombarded the minds of children with supernatural phenomena. Spiritualism is as old as the devil himself. As far as the world is concerned, it goes back to the Garden of Eden when Satan spoke to Eve through the spiritistic medium.

Modern spiritualism had its beginnings in the manifestation that began with the Fox family in Hydesville, New York in 1848. Because it broke out in Rochester, it was given the name Rochester Knockings. Such manifestations have increased and spread until now there are rapping, writing, speaking, and healing mediums in every part of the world. In the United States and England millions of people believe in supernatural phenomena. Every candid man who has had a fair chance to witness its progress in the media is compelled to acknowledge that it must be the work of invisible spirits that have both power and more than human intelligence.

Even the scientific world has taken up the investigation of spiritism. It can no longer be treated with silent contempt. Until recently, science ignored the alleged phenomenon of spiritualism. But now a noteworthy change has come as psychic and E.S.P. research delve into the secrets of the invisible world.

The Bible positively forbids communication with familiar spirits.

“When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord” (Deut. 18:9-12).

Webster gives the definition of “necromancy” as pretended communications with the dead. And spiritualists everywhere claim that spiritual communications are from the spirits of the “dead”.

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God” (Lev. 19:31).

Spiritualists do not deny that they are “calling on the dead”. The Bible refers to them as charmers, enchanters, sorcerers and practitioners of witchcraft

and necromancy. It speaks specifically against divinations and consultation with the familiar spirits—declaring them to be an abomination. Such practices are strictly forbidden in both the Old and the New Testament. (See 2 Kings 21:2-6, 9 & 11; Rev. 21:8). Those who embrace spiritualism, in essence, have to give up the Bible—both cannot be true. What people see in seances are not spirits of the dead. In ancient times when people supposed they were sacrificing to the dead, it was positively declared that they were sacrificed unto devils (Ps. 106:28 & 27 and also 1 Cor. 10:20). The dead have no knowledge of things done in the world says Job. “His sons came to honor him and he knoweth it not; they are brought low but he perceiveth it not of them” (Job 14:21). “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Ps. 146:4). The Bible adds,

“The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun” (Eccl. 9:5-6).

In 1 Tim. 4:1, we read, “Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.” Rev. 16:14 adds: “For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

Demons control many people in the world today. Christ cast out demons when He was on earth, but the world is still full of demon-controlled people. The Bible indicates that this is what we are to expect in the last days of the world’s history when Satan will transform himself into an angel of light. One way he works is to personate friends who are dead.

One spiritualist says that the operator forms an image as of a person, a serpent, a fire, or any other object on his own mind. When a subject if well under control instantly sees the same things as an object-reality—so positive minds in a circle or positive spirits who are around may present the image of any person with whom they are familiar. It may appear as reality to the impressionable medium.

Another spiritualist has said that a wise and strong-minded person in the spirit world has power to make visible the eyes of mortals the exact appearance or semblance of the body it wore before death. This presentation is elaborated sometimes to the minutest particular—even to the reproduction of appearance of habits by which the person was characterized and identified while a resident on earth.

“By their fruits ye shall know them” the Bible says. What is the fruitage of

the spirit's teachings? They teach and strive to lead men and women to loosen the bonds of conscience—particularly in respect to the sacredness of marriage. Many people today consult their "guardian spirits" with much more trust and confidence than they would a kind and experienced parent and willingly yield to their suggestions and directions in matters both great and small. But to do so is not safe. The scripture describes the deceptive character of these evil spirits and calls them seducing spirits, speaking lies and hypocrisy, deceivers, lying wonders. (See 1 Tim. 4:1-3 and 2 Tim. 3:13 and 2 Thess. 2:9-10).

To spiritualists the devil is their god and their father.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Humans are so constituted that they worship any being or power that they regard as superior to themselves. When spiritualists refuse allegiance to God and the Bible, it is not surprising that they choose Satan as their god and father. History shows that such has always been the case.

Concerning demon worship in the early Christian World, it is universal sentiment—both of the church and of heretics—that demons were the authors, patrons, and objects of idolatry. Those rebellious spirits who had been degraded from the rank of angels and cast down into the infernal pit were still permitted to roam upon the earth and torment the bodies and seduce the minds of sinful beings. Demons discovered and abused the natural propensities of the human heart towards devotion and artfully withdrew the adorations of humanity from the Creator. They usurped the place of honor that belongs to the supreme Deity. By the success through the ages of their malicious contrivance, the forces of Satan not only have gratified their own sense of vanity and revenge, but have obtained the only comfort they were able to find—the hope of involving the human race in participation in their guilt and misery.

As demons acknowledge Satan to be their god and father, we should naturally expect that when they pray through people they would pray to Satan. The spiritualist's prayer is called an invocation and this, of course, means nothing other than invoking Satan who is called the prince of the power of the air. (Eph. 2:2). No doubt Satan inspires the prayers to himself for he wants to set himself up as god in the world.

The apostle Peter says, "God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell; and delivered them into chains of darkness" (2 Peter 2:4).

These evil spirits are the antichrists. "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:3). "...denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22).

What meaning do spiritualists give the word *Christ*? To them it is not, as generally supposed, the Son, the Creator of all things. Any just and perfect being is Christ they say. But we read in Romans 1:21-23, 25:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”

“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Rom. 1:21-23, 25).

About 6,000 years ago Satan, the father of lies, said, “Ye shall be as gods.” And now we see spiritualists preaching the same old lie. They take the side of

And now we see spiritualists preaching the same old lie. They take the side of the devil every time. They despise the Bible. Almost the first thing that spirits do with their converts is destroy their confidence in the Bible. Why is this? Evidently because the Bible so fully cautions and warns against Satan's last day deceptions. Because the Bible is against the spirits, the spirits are against the Bible. One spirit is reported to have said the Book of Genesis is the skin of the old serpent. There are 300 lies in this book alone, it claimed.

Some claim that spiritualism is a better guide for human conduct than the Bible. But it is a strange guide—one that inevitably points towards destruction.

Spiritualists Are At War With Marriage

Spiritualists openly war against the marriage institution and advocate the doctrine of free love. I quote from Dr. Child on “Marriage and Religion”:

“The present laws of marriage that now give birth to regrets and sorrows unnumbered, to prostitution with its long train of curses and agonies will be abandoned for a holier, purer, diviner revelation that are long to be given to the people. A religion more spiritual will be discovered and acknowledged, resting upon no certain outside standard of rectitude upon no dogma of another, no purity of earthly life, no glory for earthly perfection. This religion is simply desire. With everyone desire is spontaneous and sincere, pure and holy. No matter what the desire is, whether it be called good or bad, it is natural God-given religion of the soul.” Taken from *Christ and the People*, pp. 27 and 29 by Dr. Child. Spiritualism has much to say about the beauties of their “sublime

philosophy" and loudly rants against the Bible as containing absurd and ridiculous things. We should suppose from the way it advocates talk that the visions and doctrines of spiritualism were a perfect model of dignity and sublimity. But let us judge them by their fruits.

Materialization A New Departure

A London paper reports that according to prophecy there is soon to be a perfect avalanche of spirit manifestations—one of the most astounding influxes the world has ever known. Modern spiritualism may assume a different guise, but it is still identical to ancient heathenism. There are strange inconsistencies—spiritualists reject the Bible as unworthy of confidence because they say it is contradictory and then blindly cling to the system composed of absurdities and contradictions, which are beyond all description. They declare the God of the Bible to be unjust because in his general judgments He destroyed infants, but they exalt the god of nature manifested in the fury of tornadoes, earthquakes, pestilences and famines that has swept away millions of innocent mothers and infants.

Spiritualists openly advocate and practice abominations and fellowship with those who teach immoralities openly and boldly. They ridicule the idea of a Creator who can raise the dead and yet teach that the human soul is composed of particles like condensed steam and that it resurrects itself. They warn against the Bible as though it would be fatal to our eternal interests to follow it and yet admit that even those who do so will share the progressive spheres after death. If spiritualism is true, we are just as well off as they, but, if the Bible is true, they are lost. By their own judgment, we have a double assurance. If there be a doubt in what we believe, which we do not admit, we are on the safe side of that doubt. Yet every Bible believer clings to a sure foundation.

Spiritualist Justify Sin and Crime — Summary

Spiritualism is nothing other than the greatest tool in the hands of Satan. He has deceived much of the Christian world with the doctrine that humans never die but go to hell or heaven at death. Half the world is pagan and there too he has deceived most pagans with the same great lie, that humans never die but go on living in another state or sphere. To the heathen, the spirits are just people who have found a new state of existence and now restlessly roam the earth.

Through the mass media Satan has prepared the world for his master deception, his crowning act in the last drama of the ages. Just before the curtain comes down on the final act, Satan will try to impersonate the coming of Christ. Although God will not permit him to perfectly counterfeit the

second coming in the clouds of heaven, Satan is a master planner and nearly three hundred years ago began laying the foundation of his final master deception with the doctrine of futurism introduced at the Council of Trent. Christopher Ribera, a Jesuit, was the architect.

Later toward the beginning of the 19th century, Irving and Darby adopted this deceptive teaching and called it the new dispensationalism or British Israelism. Scofield multiplied it on the North American continent by incorporating it in his Bible. This false teaching now is known as the secret rapture. It teaches one thing basically—that Jesus comes to Jerusalem and reigns on David's throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 years and that the tribulation comes after the Rapture. (This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.)

It is through spiritualistic phenomena that the devil is working now to prepare the world for his masterpiece. He has always wanted to be God. (See Ezek. 28 and Isa. 14). By his use of spiritualistic phenomena he may sweep into Jerusalem with his hosts of angels in UFOs, declaring that he is the Christ returned. Paul declares he will transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14).

At this point the world will be in its worst crisis. To fulfill the predictions found in the book of Revelation, I see the possibility of war over oil in the Middle East with the Master Spiritualist masquerading as the King of Kings stepping in the bring world peace. Then the whole world (nearly) will wonder after him. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:3).

Let us remember the beast in Bible prophecy primarily represents the devil, and secondly the agencies through which he works to accomplish his master plan.

In the closing scenes of this world's history in which we live, we can only depend upon the Bible and walking with Jesus moment by moment to keep us from being deceived. Our surety is in the written word. Satan's deception will be so convincing that we will not be able to trust our senses; only the "it is written" of God can keep us from his snares.

2. LIFE AFTER DEATH

In Revelation 20:6, the Bible talks about a second death. Before people can die a second time, they must live a second time. The righteous only die once, but this second death is reserved for the wicked at the end of the thousand years. We are told that Enoch and Elijah were translated so they never will die. Except for those who are alive when Jesus comes and the few that the Bible mentions as having been translated without seeing death, all the rest of the human race will die.

Gossip tabloids in recent years have been running articles about experiences of people who have died and "come back" to tell what they have seen and heard while they underwent this experience.

The Bible makes it plain that these people were not dead as the "dead know nothing".

"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun . . ." (Eccl. 9:5, 6) (NIV)

We read further "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working or planning nor knowledge nor wisdom". (Eccl. 9:10) (NIV)

The problem is 'what is death? When a person stops breathing, blood no longer reaches his brain and the thinking processes stop. His ability to reason, think and respond stops also. Only then is he dead. To understand this fully, we must go back to the nature in which humans were created.

"And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." (Gen. 2:7) (NIV).

A false doctrine that came originally from Greek philosophy teaches that we go to heaven or hell at death. Late in the first century of the Christian Church the concept that the body was a prisonhouse of the immortal soul was brought into the Christian faith. Many of the false doctrines of the Christian Church find their origins in Greek and pagan thought. The Greeks taught that the goal of life is escape from life and that it is essential to get rid of the body in order to resume a free, unfettered existence in eternity.

But the Bible does not support such a teaching. In Romans 2:7 man is admonished to seek for immortality. In 1 Tim. 1:17 the Bible tells us that only God is immortal. To be mortal means to be subject to death. Immortal means that we can never die.

Back in the Garden of Eden, the father of lies (John 8:44) told his first lie to the human race—"Ye shall not surely die." (Gen. 3:4) Unfortunately, they

believed him. And the devil has successfully foisted this original lie on the human race ever since. To keep them from becoming immortal sinners Adam and Eve were driven from the garden. They could no longer eat the fruit of the tree of life. Access to that tree and to that fruit would have made them immortal sinners. But, deprived of that tree, Adam and his descendants would die. Will humans ever become immortal, then? Praise God, we will.

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’”

(1 Cor. 15:51-54) (NIV)

“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words” (1 Thess. 4:16-18). (NIV).

At the second coming of Jesus, the righteous of every generation, who have been tested and tried will receive the precious gift of immortality.

In summary let us review what the Bible actually teaches about the human state in death:

What was Job's condition in death?

“If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come . . . If his sons are honored, he does not know it; if they are brought low, he does not see it” (Job 14:14 and 21). (NIV).

His sons came to honor him at his burial but he did not know it. His change from mortality to immortality will take place with the rest of the redeemed at the second coming of Jesus.

What was David's understanding of man's state in death?

“Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing” (Ps. 146:3 & 4) (NIV).

“It is not the dead who praise the Lord, those who go down to silence” (Ps. 115:17) (NIV).

“And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness” (Ps. 17:15) (NIV).

David said, do not put your trust in man for when he dies his thoughts perish. The dead cannot praise the Lord and, with Job and David, will wait until the resurrection for his immortality.

“For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” (Acts 2:34-35) (NIV).

In closing let us refer to Lazarus. We read the story in John 11. He had been dead four days when Jesus commanded the stone of his tomb to be rolled away. Martha said that by this time he stinketh, but Jesus was author of life. It was He who created the world and everything in it (Eph. 3:9). It was Christ who had designed and made Adam and Eve. It was He who had breathed into them the breath of life and made them living, mortal souls. And now, the Creator, the carpenter’s son from Nazareth, was about to perform the miracle of miracles giving a mortal soul breath again—to make him a living mortal soul once more.

He cried out, “Lazarus, come forth!” All eyes were fastened upon the tomb. Lazarus appeared. Christ said, “Loose him.” He ordered the wrappings and ointments removed from his once decaying body. He was alive again, although he had been dead.

Lazarus was not in heaven for those four days. If he were, I’m sure he would have asked Jesus why he was compelled to depart from the presence of holy angels and God Himself and to return to a body which must grow old and die again. If people were to go to their reward at death, there would be no need for a judgment or a resurrection. But, God has an appointed day for judgment and a resurrection.

“For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17:31) (NIV).

Some have taught that the wicked suffer eternal punishment. Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of eternal punishment. These cities are now at the bottom of the Dead Sea and the fire that consumed them is burned out.

“In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns give themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 7) (NIV).

How merciful God is—when a person dies God leaves him or her to sleep in the grave until the resurrection of the just or the unjust.

“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:28) (NIV).

3. CULTS AND GURUS

As Jesus revealed to the disciples the signs of the destruction of the sacred city of Jerusalem and the world events that would take place in the end time, He twice sent a special warning to beware of false prophets and false Christs. The appearance of these counterfeit prophets and Christs were to be an indication to true believers that the second coming of Christ was near.

“‘Watch out that no one deceives you,’” Jesus said, “‘For many will come in my name, claiming, I am the Christ, and will deceive many . . .’”

“For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.

“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it” Matthew 24:4,5,24-26, NIV.

Notice Jesus’ statement that false prophets and counterfeit Christs would be a sign that would deceive even the elect of God, if possible.

False prophets come in a variety of sizes, descriptions, and nationalities.

In the late 1950’s some American universities and colleges began to teach courses in Eastern religions. These classes were well-attended from the beginning. Gurus and Swamis living in other countries responded to this opportunity by flying to the new mission field, the United States, to spread their message. In the early 1960’s American youth began to appear on the streets of this country and at airports with shaved heads, vacant eyes, and flowers in their hands. They were tutored in this approach by such foreign cultists as Gupta, Vishnu, Devananda, Maharishi Mehes Yogi, the Reverend Moon, and many others.

This emphasis on cults and the occult led tens of thousands of young people, and some middle-aged ones as well, into an altered understanding of the world, its origin, and purpose. Sitting at the feet of these false prophets, often bleary eyed from the use of drugs, they attempted to discover the dynamics of the universe.

Most of these cults have strong ties to the occult. The occult too have strong spiritualistic overtones such as has enjoyed an unprecedented surge of attention and interest. Such movements out of the American past as Rosicrucianism, the I Am movement, and Research and Enlightenment of past are being followed by new groups in the United States such as the Astara foundation, Scientology, the Holy orders of Mans, and the church universal. Membership in occult organizations now numbers in the millions.

What is responsible for this phenomenon? In the past new religious movements largely came from the minorities and underprivileged, but today they are coming from the upper and middle class. It is found that those most vulnerable to the cults are those between the ages of 18 and 25. Most of these young people come from non-Christian homes. In many instances they have been denied parental love. They know little about God, the Bible, the Christian faith, and the plan of salvation. They are searching for hope, stability, and love in this unstable, unloving world. The drive to be accepted, to belong, makes them vulnerable to the false prophets of the Eastern occult—the gurus and swamis.

Occultism is defined in *International Review of Mission*, October 1978. “As the use of hidden powers in man to discover the hidden life in the world.” Mark Albrecht, “Occult Philosophy and Mystical experience.”

Occultism makes man his own saviour. If he follows a prescribed formula of self-improvement, he will eventually reach the highest state of mind and body where there is perfect peace, which then says you can be saved in sin, not from sin. (Compare with Matthew 1:21: “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”)

Any religion, be it Eastern or Western in origin, is false if it is not based upon the salvation taught by the inspired testimony of the Living Word, “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.” (Isa 8:20 NIV)

If a religion does not hold up Jesus Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour, as man’s only hope, then it is an invention of the devil and basically occult. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved . . . All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” (Acts 4:12 and 10:43 NIV)

Any religion that teaches that we do not have to keep the ten commandments, that substitute grace for obedience to God’s law essentially is occult. No man can be saved without God’s grace, but grace inevitably leads to obedience to known truth.

Eph 2:8,9: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Heb 5:8,9: “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

John 7:17: “If any one chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”

Occultism is something that has always confronted the Christian Church. In the apostle's day, it sprang up everywhere as Christianity began to sweep through the Roman Empire, devils in human form devised pleasing fables amalgamating paganism with the teaching of Christ. John recognized it in his day as he recorded Christ's words to the church of Smyrna, Rev. 2:9 NIV: "I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan." Some who claimed to be church members were of the synagogue of Satan.

The Apostle Paul saw that there would be false teachers teaching false doctrine. 2 Tim 4: 3,4 NIV—"For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from truth and turn aside to myths."

In the first century, under the pentecostal power of the Holy Spirit, the church flourished. The entire known world heard the wonderful gospel of salvation.

During this era the church's doctrine was kept distinct and pure by proclaiming the unique message of salvation from sin, amidst the cults and religions that then existed. The difference was easily seen by those who had become dissatisfied with pagan rituals and sacrifices and the emptiness of their lives so they eagerly reached out to the realities offered by Christ and His church.

Today in this atomic-space age, the twentieth century Christian church had been synthesized by the world's cultures. Consequently, it has lost its unique message on creation and salvation, resulting in a Christianity that is no longer unique. Now, young, old, and middle aged, are being drawn into the devil's web of sorcery and the supernatural. Because of its hypocrisy and amalgamation with paganism, Christianity lost its preeminent power to attract and has become just another voice among many.

The Christian church needs to return to pure Biblical theism—the belief in the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), Who created all things, Who knows all things and sees all things, and Who came into the world to save sinners from their sins.

I John 5:6,7: "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

Ps. 33:6,14: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth . . . from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—" (NIV)

The church today needs to rediscover essential Biblical truth through the careful study of the word of God, line upon line, precept upon precept (Isa 28: 9,10).

The Christian life gives a unique testimony of what God's power has done and will do for every believing child of God. It delivers from all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to do evil and delivers the sinner from immoral thoughts and evil tempers. God's saving power is the same that captivated the thief on the cross and held him fast with that dynamic love until he died. This same power changed the life of Mary Magdalene into a woman of purity. If God's church would give such a dynamic witness to a lost world, the Gurus and the occult would return to the pit from which they came.

4. THE SECRET RAPTURE AND THE SECOND COMING

Thirty years ago the teaching of the secret rapture was rarely found among Christian churches. But in the last 15 years a great phenomenon has taken place in Christendom. The charismatic movement was born. Words like, "born again" and "new birth" became common phrases to the churches and TV congregations. The P.T.L. Club and other television programs have made much of the "secret rapture" theory and today the majority of the churches believe that Jesus will sweep away millions secretly. Bumper stickers say, "Beware, this driver may be raptured." Songs are composed and sung about pilotless planes and trains when the rapture begins. Consequently this teaching demands careful Bible study on the part of every Christian.

The secret rapture idea has its basis in futurism which began with the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation. Luther, Knox, and other reformers had identified the antichrist mentioned in the Bible as being the Pope. At the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church sought for 18 years to remove this accusation by some variable explanation of Scripture. One of the approaches they adopted was the futuristic theory, invented by the Jesuit, Christopher Ribera. Ribera tried to set aside the obvious application of these prophecies to the papal power by bringing out a system of interpretation which asserts that these prophecies refer to some future supernatural individual who is yet to appear and continue in power for three and one-half years. One writer takes the position that Ribera founded the futuristic system of prophetic interpretation about 1580 A.D. He continues, "It is a matter of deep regret that those who hold and advocate the Futuristic system at the present day, are Protestants, as they are, for the most part, really playing into the hands of Rome and helping to screen the papacy from detection as the antichrist." *Daniel and Revelation*, p. 16, 17. In the 19th century, a pastor by the name of Irving studied the writings of Ribera and began teaching "futurism." It was next adopted by John Darby, then by Scofield Bible, which is credited with the introduction and growth of the secret rapture theory in the United States today.

What The Secret Rapture Proponents Believe

Briefly, proponents of this theory believe that Christ will return secretly before the tribulation to take the saints to heaven. Then come the great tribulation and the antichrist. During a subsequent seven year period 144,000 Jews will be converted—these then convert the rest of the world. After the seven years of tribulation, Christ returns for what is called His second coming although it actually would be a third coming. At that time, He is supposed to set up His kingdom in Jerusalem and reign on David's throne for 1,000 years.

Is such a teaching Biblical? Let us answer first the text in which this rapture doctrine is rooted:

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Luke 17:34-37).

In the first place, the meaning of this passage is so obscure that it is a difficult one to build an entire system of interpretation on. Were the good people left or were they taken? You can find Bible scholars who take positions on both sides of this question. When the disciples asked "Where?" were they asking about where those left were left or where those taken were taken? Again you can find Bible commentaries that take both positions. Then what did Christ mean in His reply?

One thing is clear. The context is talking about judgment—judgment in the days of Noah (verses 26, 27) and judgment in the days of Lot and Sodom (verses 28-32). On one side are the saved and on the other are the lost (verse 33).

Then comes the passage in dispute—verses 34-37. One group is taken, one is left. But whichever group is which, the context makes it certain that one group is saved while the other group is lost.

None of this supports the secret rapture theory. If those taken are saved, that means those left are destroyed, not given a second chance. If those left are the saved, that means that those taken silently away are destroyed, not given a second chance. This shoots the "secret rapture" concept all to pieces.

After the disciples had listened to the words of Jesus, they asked Him the question, "Where are they going to be left, Lord?" (See verse 37.) Jesus described the condition under which they are left. It is evident that Luke 17 does not provide a creditable basis for the secret rapture theory. Those who hold to this idea believe that after the rapture, the world will go on as it has been and during the seven years the world will have a second chance and will be converted.

Let us see what the Bible says about the condition of this earth after Christ's second coming. We read in Jeremiah 4:23-27:

"I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate: yet will I not make a full end."

Then, we read again in Jeremiah 25:33:

“And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.”

Now, let us read the words of Christ and the answer to the question asked by the disciples. Matt. 24:3,4.

“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.”

Jesus knew there would be many deceptions concerning His coming and warned us not to be deceived. Matt. 24:5 and on describes the condition of the world just prior to His return. This condition exists today.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24: 30).

The sinners of the world are unprepared to meet Jesus. They cannot endure His glory. The brightness of His coming destroys them. We read:

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders” (2 Thess. 2:8-9).

“And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev. 6:14-17).

Peter speaks of the terrible devastation of the earth and the destruction of the wicked.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the

heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:10-14).

Because Christ's coming is a surprise to the world, we are counseled to be diligent and be watching for His return so that His coming will not surprise us and find us unprepared.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44).

The rapturists believe that these texts are fulfilled *after* the seven years of tribulation and the antichrist. If we know that exactly seven years after the rapture, Christ will return there would be no surprise. Christ would then not come as a thief. The rapturists also teach that there will be a thousand year reign of Christ in Jerusalem at His second coming. This surely does not fit into the description the Bible gives concerning the second coming and the millennium. Let us examine the promise of His coming in John 14:3.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also."

The rapturist preach a third coming that follows the secret second coming. Jesus would come a third time after seven years of tribulation. But what does the Bible teach?

"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

At this time every eye shall see Him.

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev. 1:7).

He will be as visible as the lightning on a dark night. (Matt. 24:27). At this time the wicked cry for the mountains to cover them. (Rev. 6:16).

"For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27).

Does the Bible teach a second chance? Absolutely not.

⚡ The rapturists use Luke 17:34-37 for the basis of their belief. But, these

verses are coupled with their 27th verse, which describes the destruction of the world in Noah's day. And it says, "... the flood came and destroyed them all." Not one wicked person was left. There is no second chance for anyone. We must make our calling and election sure today.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, given diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10).

"And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt 24:39).

Probation closed for them when the door of the ark closed. The door was closed by God and no man could open it. When the Bible says that the flood destroyed all the wicked, it does not mean seven years after a rapture. The character of everyone will be fixed forever at His coming. The people of Sodom had no second chance and yet Jesus likens the end of the world to the days of Sodom.

"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:28-30).

Now, what about the *manner* of Christ's return?

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

Jesus will come in like manner as He went into heaven. He went in the sight of men and He will come the second time in the sight of men. This is no secret coming. Every eye shall see Him. (Rev. 1:7).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2).

We will be like Him in character—His sinless life will be reproduced in our life. All sin will be removed. We will be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. (See Matt. 5:48; 2 Peter 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 2 Peter 3:14; 1 Tim. 6:14).

Jesus appeared to Abraham (Gen. 12:7); to Moses (Matt. 17:3); to Mary (Mark 16:9); to the eleven disciples (Mark 16:14). In all these instances when He appeared, He was seen. When Jesus comes the second time, He will appear and be seen by the entire world, by both the just and the unjust.

Another fact that the rapture theory must fall is found in Rev. 20:4-6: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

The first resurrection is for the righteous. The second resurrection occurs at the end of the thousand years when the wicked will be raised. This places tribulation before the second coming. According to Revelation 20:4, the saints are martyred for their refusal to compromise their Christian faith. (See Luke 21:16; Matt. 24:7 and Rev. 18:24 and Rev. 16:6.) The beast is the devil or the antichrist. These saints are killed because they refuse the mark of the beast, but they rise in the first resurrection. The rapturists believe that they are going to reign with Christ seven years. The Bible says the reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:6).

Another prophecy deals with the Jewish nation—Dan. 9:24-27:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

The doctrine of the Secret Rapture, based on the 70th week of Daniel 9:24, teaches that the last week of the 70 weeks begins with the rapture. The

antichrist will then come on the scene of action. He enters into some kind of agreement with the Jews in the midst of the week, or three and one-half years after the rapture. Then he breaks the agreement with the Jews which begins the great tribulation prophesied by Daniel. At the sign of Jesus coming in the clouds at the end of the seventieth week the Jews are converted. These Jews then act as missionaries to the world and millions accept Christ. Following this, according to the Secret Rapture theory, the greatest time of salvation the world has ever known will take place. This is Satan's counterfeit second-coming message and is based on an arbitrary unscriptural disconnecting of the seventieth week from the sixty-nine preceding weeks.

The seventieth week is abruptly removed from the sixty-nine weeks at the time of Christ and leaps ahead two thousand years with no connecting link between. This prophecy began with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem which at the time of Daniel's vision lay in ruins from the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. The Medes and Persians issued three decrees to rebuild the city: Cyrus' decree about 537 B.C. (See Ezra 1:1-4); Darius I's decree about 520 B.C. (See Ezra 6:1-12); and Artaxerxes' decree in the seventh year of his reign—458 to 457 B.C. (See Ezra 7:1-26). Neither Cyrus nor Darius made any provision for the restoration of the civil state as a complete religio-political unit. Artaxerxes did.

According to documented, archeological findings, Artaxerxes' reign began in December 465 B.C. Seven full years of his reign would bring it to the fall of the year 457 B.C. Therefore, 457 B.C. becomes the year in which he wrote the decree which sent several thousand Jews back to Jerusalem with funds and builders, restoring it to an independent state.

Under the administration of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, the walls of the temple were rebuilt. It took 49 years. In all time prophecies God's key to interpretation is to count a day for a year. Sixty-two weeks after the completion of the building under Nehemiah, the Messiah would appear. What a marvelous prophecy this was! The Jews could have known the time of their Messiah if they had studied the Scriptures. Christ became the anointed Messiah at His baptism by John in the fall of AD 27. When God spoke, "this is my beloved Son," Christ's ministry began. From this moment another week of seven days (years) were allotted to the Jewish nation.

The Messiah was to be "cut off" (Dan. 9:26). In the 27th verse the sacrifices are said to cease; the sacrificial system which pointed to the Lamb of God came to an end. When Christ said, "It is finished"—His death took place in the midst of the week or three and one-half days (years) after His baptism. Another three and one-half years were *still allowed* to the Jewish nation—

the *complete fulfillment* of the seventh week took place in AD 34 at the stoning of Stephen. (See Acts 7:53-60 and Acts 13:46). Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said it was necessary that "the word of God should have first been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." In AD 34, the Jewish nation came to an end. (See Romans 11:1-21).

Today Jews can be saved in the same way as Gentiles. They now must be grafted into the Vine, Jesus Christ. They must accept Jesus Christ individually as their personal Saviour. All the promises given to ancient Israel will be fulfilled to the saved—God's true Israel (Gal. 3:29).

Modern Israel

The nation of Israel today cannot sustain the same relationship to God that ancient Israel did. The promises made to the Jews in Eze. 36:24, 33-35 were conditional promises—conditioned on obedience to God. If they obeyed they would receive the blessings of God; but if they disobeyed, they would receive His cursings (Deut. 28). Deut. 11:26-28 also bears this out:

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."

Every Bible student is familiar with Israel's long history of disobedience, as they often worshipped the gods of the heathen. Then at last they killed their Messiah. Prior to this they had killed most of His prophets. And His blood has been upon them as a curse for nearly 2,000 years. They have been wanderers throughout the world. Jeremiah had prophesied about Israel:

; "Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury" (Jer. 19:10-11).

This tells us that the time would come when God would never again claim the Jewish nation as His people. It has been said that among the seven or eight million Jews in the world only about five percent are orthodox or religious. Christian missionaries in Israel say they see few real conversions to Christianity but are thankful for these few.

Will God force the Jews to obey? It is not in the character of Christ to force anyone. True obedience is loving obedience. The second chance theory propagated through the rapture doctrine is a great delusion of Satan. He is preparing the world for his last great delusion—his impersonation of Christ. (See 2 Cor. 11:14; and 2 Thess. 2:2-9; and Matt. 24:23-24.) As Christ came in human flesh so Satan will take the form of man and announce that he is Christ. In the same way that the incarnation of Christ is a mystery of Godliness, Satan manifested in the flesh, who claims to be God, will become the mystery of iniquity spoken of in 2 Thess. 2.

The glorious holy mountain mentioned in Dan. 11:45 is Jerusalem (See Zech. 8:3 and Dan. 9:16). Satan will establish his throne there and the world will follow after him. (See Rev. 13:3.) We must remember in interpreting Rev. 13 that the beast primarily represents the devil, secondarily the agencies that the devil uses on earth. The world will be deceived and, if possible, the very elect. Only those who are in complete loving obedience to Christ and all the truth will endure to the end. When Christ comes in glory the living saints are caught up with the resurrected righteous dead (see 1 Thess. 4:16-18). Every eye shall see Him at this time. (Rev. 1:7). The wicked will be afraid (Rev. 6:14-17). They will be destroyed by His glory (2 Thess. 2:8). The saints will reign with Christ a thousand years—not just seven years. The devil will be bound to this earth for 1000 years by having no one to deceive (Rev. 20:1-2). The earth is desolate (Jer. 4:23-27 and Jer. 25:33 and Isa. 24:1 and 3). The wicked have been slain at Christ's second coming (2 Peter 3:9-12). The new Jerusalem comes down after the 1,000 years (Rev. 21:1-4). The wicked are raised in the second resurrection (Rev. 20:5-8). They surround the city under the leadership of Satan. Fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them (Rev. 20:9). Jesus Christ creates a new heaven and a new earth:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

In the short space of this one chapter, it is impossible to deal with this subject in its fulness. But what we have outlined should help the honest hearts who are searching for truth and who may be caught up in the secret rapture theory but are still open to understanding what God's word teaches. May God help us to all keep searching for truth and be willing *to be made willing* to follow Jesus all the way.

5. FAITH HEALERS AND SPEAKING IN TONGUES

It is not my intention to attack or offend anyone in the charismatic movement by what I say in this chapter. There are many honest people in every church. But I feel the need, in this confused age, of setting forth truth as I understand it.

Today every Christian is aware of a great international denominational revival that is sweeping the world known as the Charismatic Movement. It is no respecter of church creeds—it is found in both Catholic and Protestant churches. A large number of the clergy are involved—from bishops to local pastors.

The purpose of our study in this chapter is to try to evaluate whether this revival is of the Holy Spirit or of another spirit. In 1 John 4:1 we read, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (NIV) Let us, then, try the spirits to see if we can identify which spirit is responsible for this charismatic revival.

The modern Christian world has not witnessed an awakening in so many churches by so many people before. The people who are involved in it believe that it is the final movement of God in this world to prepare the way for the second coming of Christ. Yet those who are spiritually honest must put the teaching of this movement to the acid test of the Holy Scriptures. There are two things which this movement manifests that we must consider carefully: 1. They claim to have power to heal, and 2. They believe that the only true evidence of the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. The people involved in this movement believe that their lives are controlled by a supernatural power. This we do not doubt—but what power? Also, those who have “received the spirit” are enthusiastic in recommending it to others. This is one explanation for its phenomenal growth.

As intelligent human beings we must recognize that something real and serious is taking place, for it is dividing many churches—Catholic and Protestant alike. As honest Christians, we are faced with a decision. If it is of God, we must accept it. If it is the true gift of the Spirit, we must seek for it with all our hearts. On the other hand, if it is not of God we must reject it and warn the world that it is the devil’s counterfeit revival. This movement is either of God or it is not of God. No neutral ground exists. We want to make it clear that we are not judging people. God has not given us the authority to do so. We believe that God has honest people in every one of the churches in this movement. But, by God’s Holy Word, we can judge movements.

In 1 Thes. 5:21, God has commissioned us to prove all things; when the Word Supports what is being tested, the Bible calls it “good”. We are to “hold fast” to the “good”. On the other hand, we must remember that for every truth

the devil has a counterfeit. Therefore, to discriminate between them we must prove all things by His Word. Line upon line, precept upon precept. (Read Isa. 28:13.) Thus we must gather all evidence on any Bible subject.

“This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words”—(I Cor. 2:13) (NIV)

When we compare spiritual with spiritual, we will not be left in doubt concerning any of God’s truths.

May I make it clear at this point that I believe in the Holy Spirit as the greatest motivating Power of God in the world. I believe in Pentecost. I believe that Pentecost will again be manifested to and in God’s people prior to the second coming of Christ. I believe that all those who love the Lord with heart, soul, mind, and body and who demonstrate this by obedience to all of God’s commandments—who are willing to be made willing to obey God in every detail by the power of the Holy Spirit—will receive this outpouring of the Holy Spirit in what the prophet Joel describes as the latter rain experience to be manifested at the second pentecost.

Many of the organizations that speak in tongues believe and teach that salvation comes only to those who have been given this supernatural evidence of the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues. Is it possible then that this is not the Biblical gift of tongues? That the supernatural display of power exhibited by charismatics is *not* the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Private Prayer

Some have told me that they only use the gift of tongues for a private prayer experience, but remember the gift of tongues at Pentecost was given in order for the church to witness to others. It was never used for self. God understands all the languages of the world, and the Bible indicates that people prayed in their own languages. God heard their prayers. Daniel and Elijah did not use unknown tongues or have a translator to communicate to God or the people. Prayer is man’s greatest opportunity and privilege. In prosperity or adversity a person can pour out his heart to God in his closet, on his bed, when washing dishes or driving the car. The great God of the universe, who never sleeps, hears the cries of His people in their own language. The words of the penitent reach Him and nothing can drown the soul’s desire. Our God answers every sincere prayer. Praise His name for that!

Is Praying in Tongues Biblical

Let us read I Cor. 14:14-15:

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind.”(NIV)

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

Remember that the word *unknown* is added by the translators of the King James Version. The Revised Standard omits it as most other versions do also.

What Paul really is saying is that when we pray, we pray in the spirit.

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express." (Romans 8: 26) (NIV)

The Spirit then makes intercession for us, for we do not understand what we should pray for: "And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." (Romans 8: 27). (NIV)

Paul did not always understand his own experience in prayers, but he was confident that the Holy Spirit was interceding, translating for him in his prayer to the heavenly Father.

We must remember that the members of the early church were baptized by the Holy Spirit—Jews and Gentiles alike. This marvelous phenomenon, recorded in Acts 10, took place when Cornelius and other Gentile believers were baptized with the Holy Ghost.

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God." Acts 10:44-46 (NIV)

When an individual, whatever his race or creed, accepts Jesus completely, is willing to be made willing to merge his will with God's and to live an obedient life and keep the commandments of God by the power of the Spirit, (see John 14 and 15:10; Romans 6:16), then the power of God comes upon him in its fulness. Heaven identified those people in New Testament time by giving them the gift of tongues.

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (Acts 2:4) (NIV)

There is another phenomenon here that we must not completely pass over in studying 1 Cor. 14:14. We discover that Paul was a prophet and had been carried off in vision. He speaks of this experience in 2 Cor. 12:1.

Daniel also had a phenomenal experience while in vision as well as the other prophets of God. (See Dan. 10:17.) Remember that God needs no one to talk with Him in an "unknown" language or gibberish for He understands the mother tongues of every sincere convert to Christ.

The gifts of languages were given to tell others of God's plan to save all who would accept Jesus by faith. Daniel and Elijah did not pray in language that they did not understand. When the prophets spoke to the people, they needed no translator. They spoke in a language that the people understood.

The Gift of Languages — The Last Gift

Among the lists of gifts given in the New Testament is Eph. 4:11-13 (NIV): "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

In this list the gift of languages is not even mentioned and these gifts were given for the perfecting of the saints. God through inspiration, reveals that it was not necessary to have this gift of languages to have a perfect relationship with Jesus. Remember that it was the Holy Spirit who inspired Paul. In the 13th verse we are told that the gifts listed in these verses were to bring the members of the body of Christ into unity of faith. But the gift of tongues as taught by the charismatics today does not bring harmony. Instead it brings disunity. It is splitting and dividing many churches and turning Christians against other Christians.

The charismatics themselves are not united in doctrine. Baptist charismatics believe in baptism by immersion. Assembly of God charismatics stand with their Baptist brethren. But Catholic, Presbyterian and Episcopalian charismatics believe sprinkling is all that is required. Catholics pray to the saints and to Mary, and other charismatics say that is blasphemy. Catholic charismatics believe in purgatory and the infallibility of the Pope, and many other things that Protestants do not regard as Biblical. How then does this phenomenon of speaking in tongues unify them in the faith? It does not. It unifies them in an experience but not in a doctrine. And doctrine is what faith is based on.

"If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17). (NIV).

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). (NIV).

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14: 26). (NIV).

The Holy Spirit was given to teach the *whole* truth. It cannot lie. It is impossible for the Spirit to teach error.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:8, NIV).

If the Holy Spirit really brings charismatics together why is there no unity in what they teach and believe? There is only unity in one thing—a supernatural experience. Let us remember that Satan is the master counterfeiter of the supernatural experience. We find him in the days before the Exodus making counterfeits to the miracles of Moses. Rev. 16:14 describes the spirits of devils working miracles in the last days. Rev. 13:13 indicates that Satan even makes fire fall from heaven. Satan is the master of such phenomena.

One Body

We read in 1 Cor. 12:13-20 (NIV):

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up on one part but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts but one body."

The Pentecostal movement today makes speaking in tongues (one of the gifts) the whole body. If you do not have the gift of tongues you are at best a second-class Christian in their eyes. But in God's church there is no second-class.

In 1 Cor. 14:15 (NIV) we read: "So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind." What Paul is saying is that we must pray with understanding. We must sing with understanding. The devil's work is to distort and control the minds of all in the world. Up to now he has been most successful. The great controversy between Christ and Satan is over the control of the mind. The greatest battle ever fought is the battle for our minds.

In 2 Cor. 10:5 (NIV), we read: "...and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." We are to bring every thought of the mind under the control of the Holy Spirit. The plan of salvation revolves around restoring us to our Edenic home and state.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:2). (NIV).

The renewing of the mind is called the new birth.

“I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, ‘ he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . ‘ I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’ ”(John 3:3,5)(NIV)

Without the new birth, no man can see God. God never forces the mind, but the devil does. In Pentecostal meetings many people lose control of their emotions, their minds, and even the movement of their bodies. They sometimes lose control of themselves completely and are disconnected from their powers of comprehension and understanding. Then in a supernatural state they are convinced they are under the control of the Spirit. (Read 1 John 4: 1—“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”) God knew that in these last days Satan would attempt to counteract the gifts of the Spirit. That’s why we must try the spirits and hold fast only that which is good.

Is All Healing Of God?

Since the charismatic preacher is many times also a “healer” let us remember that among the signs that Jesus gave to the last-day church that the end is near was His prediction of “false prophets”. “And many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.”(Matt. 24:11). (NIV). A false prophet is one who misinterprets scripture and therefore teaches error. Remember, Satan is responsible for all disease in the world, but he cannot heal actual disease. However he has many ways to make it appear that he has healed people. Much of our sickness is psychosomatic. We really *are* sick, but it is brought on largely by our thinking. Satan certainly can change our thinking and thus improper thinking causes the disease.

What about the long healing lines shown on TV or in charismatic meetings? Many times the sick when touched by the “healer” will lose consciousness. The Bible records no such method of healing.

God never overrules man’s will. He did not in the case of Adam and Eve, and He does not interfere with our will today. “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Jos. 24:15), He bids us. If your will is not controlled by the Holy Spirit, it will be controlled by Satan. There is no neutral ground. Men have committed heinous acts for which they were sorry for the rest of their lives because the devil was in control of their will. When God heals us we must not only be conscious of what He is doing but willing to give up those habits that cause sickness in the first place.

Rationalizing Away Disobedience

Many of the homosexual churches are Charismatic. They believe that they have a supernatural evidence through speaking in tongues that God has accepted them in their practice of homosexuality. Therefore, they believe that if God accepts them, then the Christian society should accept them. (See Rom. 1:26-28). This is definitely sacrilege.

God never pours his spirit upon people who commit open sin. And homosexuality is "open sin". Therefore, we can be certain that God does not pour out His Spirit on any one confessing to be a homosexual.

LANGUAGES

Have we any evidence that those speaking in tongues are speaking in a real language? An investigator at Union Theological Seminary in New York some years back spent ten years recording people speaking in tongues. He recorded thousands of experiences. Another researcher in Montreal spent five years studying in experiences of tongues. He wrote a book entitled *Tongues of Men and Angels*. Hundreds of tape recordings were gathered from around the world of people speaking in tongues. No syllables or words of any known language have been found. In fact, the researcher concluded that there was little evidence of grammatical rules that could be applied to any language. One hundred copies of a person speaking in tongues were circulated to people who claimed to be able to interpret tongues. After listening to the recordings and writing their interpretations, the 100 interpretations were compared. They *did not agree* with each other. Do you think the Holy Spirit would cause one hundred people to give one hundred different explanations? Never! The best language experts in the world find no evidence of a real language or any sense to speaking in tongues.

CORINTH

The city of Corinth was a port town—one of the crossroads of the world. It was a second Sodom, filled with immorality. Pagan temples were everywhere. Some of them had hundreds of prostitutes who were called "priestesses". In performing their heathen rites, these "priestesses" would use a gibberish. Thus the Corinthian Church was made up of converted heathen who were used to hearing this gibberish in their religion. In 1 Corinthians, Paul is dealing with two different problems. The first problem was that those who had been converted by his ministry had gone to pagan temples and were associating with pagan friends. As a result they were caught up with this gibberish and brought it into the Christian church. (See 1 Cor. 14:10-11.) We must realize that Paul did not encourage speaking in tongues although he was being tactful in what he said. On the contrary (read verses 17 and 18) Paul would rather that words be spoken which all the

congregation could understand without an interpreter. Paul was a linguist. He spoke Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek, and possibly other languages in his wide travels. He never used gibberish.

The second problem that Paul was dealing with in 1 Cor. 14 was that travelers coming to Corinth were Christians from other parts of the world. Since church services were sometimes just testimonies and prayers of the members, these people of other countries found it easier to testify and pray in their own language rather than in Greek. That is why Paul said in verses 16 and 27, "Let one interpret" so the whole church can be blessed.

The Bible tells us that "by their fruits you shall know them." The test of the Holy Spirit is not speaking in tongues but whether we have the fruits of the Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Gal. 5:22-23). (NIV).

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him." (Acts 5:32). (NIV).

When we demonstrate loving obedience to God, we know that we have the Holy Spirit with us. Those who are living in disobedience to God's commandments and speaking in tongues, are controlled by a spirit, but not by the Holy Spirit.

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:13-14). (NIV).

"It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve." (2 Cor. 11:15). (NIV).

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matt. 7:21-23). (NIV).

Many are sincere in this, but sincerely wrong. Sincerity will not save us. The charismatic movement was created to deceive the sincere. There are those who think they must have a "feeling" but true religion is not dependent on feeling or emotion. What we need is the knowledge that we are right with God. Then we can have real peace with God. Talking in gibberish, losing control of our bodily or emotional response of any kind is no evidence that we

are being used by the Holy Spirit. Instead a renewing of the mind, a complete change from the old life to the new gives that evidence.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Cor. 5:17-18). (NIV).

6. ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

The doctrine that if once we have really been saved we will always continue in that condition has wide acceptance in the Christian world today. It is true, that God predestined every man, woman and child in the world to be saved, if they will take advantage of the salvation God has provided:

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.”
(Titus 2:11, NIV).

The plan of salvation given to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, after they had sinned, was for every one of their children. However, God allows humans to decide for themselves whether they will accept it. Cain could have chosen to obey God, just as his brother, Abel, did. If he had, he would have been saved. God did not create or predestine anyone to be lost.

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) (NIV)

Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary was for the sins of the whole world. There is no exception:

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2). (NIV)

Yet only those who choose God and His ways and eschew the ways of the world will be saved.

“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15) (NIV)

Eve exercised her choice at the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When Adam saw that his wife had eaten the forbidden fruit, he exercised his choice and they both became sinners.

God gives everyone the opportunity to know truth, but He never interferes with or forces the will. God sends His angels and the Holy Spirit to invite us to obey His commandments, to help us to resist evil, to choose His way, but He does not force anyone to obey. God is a God of love.

“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” (Rev. 22:17) (NIV)

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20). (NIV)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30) (NIV)

Because God is a God of infinite love, He could not create some to be lost and some to be saved. He did not create Adam and Eve *to* sin. They were created sinless—perfect. And God's desire was that they should always stay that way. But, He gave them the power of choice and they misused it. They willed to disobey. In the "once saved, always saved" doctrine, the saved person is deprived of his freedom to exercise his choice or his will in the matter. No matter what he does, he *has* to be saved. If a man accepts Christ in his youth and lives a godly life, but then falls into sin, becomes a drunkard, a liar, a thief and an adulterer according to the "once saved, always saved" theory, God has no alternative but to save him. Of course, some get around this by saying that he really was not saved in the first place.

What does the Bible say?

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27) (NIV)

"...nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:10) (NIV)

God will never allow anyone to enter into heaven who is in rebellion. Rebellion began in heaven with Lucifer and God cast him and one-third of the angels out of heaven.

The plan of salvation is designed in such a way that we are given the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse us from sin and to give us victory over sin, so that we will be safe to save.

The "once saved, always saved" theory is closely related to the Catholic doctrine of purgatory. In purgatory, sinners are retained in the fire for a time *to be cleansed* from their sins before they are taken into the presence of God. In the "once saved, always saved" doctrine, the sinner is cleansed at the judgment seat of Christ. Both make it possible for people to be saved in their sins and to be cleansed after life has been completed. Matt. 1:21 and other Bible passages indicate that we are saved *from* sin, not *in* sin.

The apostle John, writing of the Holy City where Christ sits in the judgment seat said:

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev 21: 27). (NIV)

To carry this idea to its extremes, we could say that the prodigal son was saved while living with harlots and living a riotous life. But Paul says:

“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 6:9,10) (NIV)

These words make it clear that the unrighteous will *not* inherit the kingdom of God. To say the people like the prodigal can be saved in their licentious lifestyle is to pervert the grace of God.

“For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” (Jude 4) (NIV)

Let us look at the judgment mentioned by Paul:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10) (NIV)

What is the purpose of bringing people to judgment if they are going to be saved no matter what they have done or what they will do in the future?

“I thought in my heart, ‘God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed’ ” (Eccl. 3:17) (NIV)

Both the righteous and the wicked are to be judged. If there is to be judgment there must be a standard to be judged by. When people appear before the Judge of this world, they will be judged by God’s law. They cannot be condemned or exonerated unless there is a law. People are brought before the judgment seat of Christ because they have been sinners. They have transgressed the law. What law? The law of God.

“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). (NIV)

It is not the Spirit of God that leads people to think that they can go to heaven while practicing known sin. Listen to this inspired testimony:

“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:8-10) (NIV)

“If we claim to have fellowship with him, yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth” (1 John 1:6) (NIV)

The prodigal left his father’s house and left the faith of his father. He loved the world more than he loved his father. As a consequence, he was unsaved. But then he gave up his life of sin, repented of his wrong-doing, and returned to his father. Then he was saved. But when we do not repent, the Scriptures tell us that we are among those who “bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge” (1 Tim. 5:12) (NIV)

“I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:14,15) (NIV)

When the prodigal son returned, he came to the father with a repentant heart—repentance not to be repented of:

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death” (2 Cor. 7:10) (NIV)

The father recognized this sincere repentance, forgave him, and treated him as though he had never sinned. But to retain that relationship with the father, he must continue to merge his will with his father’s will in obedience to the rules of his father’s household. Just so, we are to relate to the law of God. We become servants of God rather than servants of self.

“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16) (NIV)

“And once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (Heb. 5:9) (NIV)

Sincere repentance and loving obedience to the law of the father brought the prodigal back home and enabled him to be received as a son.

If God saved people “in their sins” and not “from their sins” and put them in a perfect world, it would not be long before they would be organizing a committee to improve heaven as Lucifer did. God would then have the same problem of rebellion all over again. Our only credential for salvation is that we love God with all our mind and heart. We will then be in daily covenant relationship with God, willing to obey His commandments.

“If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love” (John 15:10) (NIV)

“We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, ‘I know him’, but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3,4) (NIV)

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13) (NIV)

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—” (Jude 24) (NIV)

God’s law can be obeyed by the same power that Jesus used—the Holy Spirit—if we are willing to allow him to control us as Jesus was willing.

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4,5) (NIV)

When we refuse to obey, we choose to be lost. There is nothing God can do for us unless we repent and, in loving obedience, choose to serve God. Even the apostle Paul believed that he could be lost after he preached to others.

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:27 KJV)

One of the best illustrations that can be used to refute the false theory of “once saved, always saved” is the history of King Saul. God called him in his youth to be a king of Israel, filled him with the Holy Spirit, and he even prophesied:

“The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person . . .” (1 Sam 10:6) (NIV)

“As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying” (1 Sam 10:9,10) (NIV)

Saul fell into the same trap as did Lucifer. He became proud and boastful, “Samuel said, ‘Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out’” (1 Sam 15:17,18) (NIV)

In his pride he offered a sacrifice that only Samuel, the prophet, could offer and disobeyed God’s command in dealing with the Amalekites. He then defended himself, saying that he had obeyed. In time, God took the kingdom from him. (Read chapter 15 of 1st Samuel.)

"Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him" (1 Sam 16:14) (NIV)

Although at one time the Spirit of the Lord caused Saul to prophesy, now the Spirit of the Lord left him and an evil spirit controlled him. There is no neutral ground with God. Either we are controlled by the Spirit of God or by the spirit of Satan.

In his troubled state of mind, Saul consulted the witch of Endor before he killed himself. When the battle went against him, "Saul said to his armorbearer, 'Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me'" (1 Sam. 31:4) (NIV). No murderer can inherit the kingdom of heaven. (Read Rev. 21:8.)

There are many counterfeits in these last days. Every wind of doctrine and false teaching is blowing upon the earth and the church. Remember that the devil, if possible, will deceive the very elect of God. We must study and pray, comparing scripture with scripture.

"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'" (Mat. 7:22) (NIV)

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21) (NIV)

For further study on this subject, please read Galatians 5:21; John 15:2,5,6; Romans 8:14; John 14, 15 and 21; John 12:35; Romans 6:16; 2 Cor. 5:20; 1 John 5:12; Romans 5:1; and Romans 8:1,2,6.

7. GOD'S ETERNAL LAW

Would you agree that the law of God is without beginning and end? When you understand that the law is a transcript of God's character, then you will have to acknowledge that it is as eternal and unchangeable as He is. It is God's design that all the loyal beings of His creation should reflect His character by perfect obedience to His perfect law.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7) (NIV).

Lucifer contested God's authority over what he considered to be the arbitrary demands of this perfect law. His revolt in heaven started a great controversy that not only confronted the angels of heaven, but the entire universe. Finally it centered in this world, taken captive by the father of lies (See John 8:44).

The fall of Adam and Eve violated God's perfect law which was to be a guide for perfect people in a perfect world. It had been given to them to maintain their loyalty to and perfect happiness in a loving God. They lost both when they sinned and transgressed the law.

Through eons of time God has created perfect beings in myriads of perfect worlds with the freedom to love Him or not to love Him, to obey Him or not to obey Him, as they choose. A loving God would not have created humans as robots which they would be without the freedom of choice.

But finally created beings on this planet believed Satan's lie, "Thou shalt not surely die." Adam and Eve lost their faith and confidence in their Creator, who was Jesus Christ Himself (See Col. 1:16,17; Eph. 3:9). They then lost their righteousness and began to lose their Godlikeness. They could no longer love or live like God, for they were unwilling to obey God's law in the smallest particular. The Gospel teaches that God is so particular concerning His law, that to offend in one point is to be guilty of all.

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker" (James 2:10). (NIV).

The only way that we can know what sin is, is by the law. "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness" (I John 3:4, NIV).

In the same way that speeder on the highway can only be convicted of speeding because there is a law that governs speed, so God can only convict the sinner of sin because God's law governs and determines what constitutes sinful thoughts, words, and actions. Many Christians today think that we are under the Gospel dispensation and therefore no longer under the law. The grace of Christ is all the Christian needs, they say. The Bible makes it plain

that: "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8,9). (NIV).

Grace is the unmerited favor of God towards sinful human beings. This grace is not something we deserve, but Christ was treated as we deserve that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins in which He had no share, that we as sinners could be justified by His perfect righteousness in which we had no share. God's grace was expressed perfectly on Calvary.

However, the Bible clearly states that faith does not make void the perfect law or legalize sin.

"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law" (Rom 3:31). (NIV) (Rom. 6:1,2)

The gospel can only be written on the heart of those who accept Jesus, who are willing to be made willing to lovingly obey God's perfect will as expressed in His perfect law. When that happens, perfect obedience is a spontaneous reaction that produces the fruits of righteousness in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul describes his personal experience this way in Phil. 3:8,9 (NIV):

"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."

Paul says the law cannot produce righteousness in itself. It is only the faith of Jesus received into the heart as a gift of God that can. This gift of faith produces power to live right and the perfect product of such a relationship is righteousness, which the sinner or the law cannot generate. Those who believe that obeying the law by their own power, or that the law saves them are Pharisees or legalists. But those who know by experience that the faith of Christ gives them power to do what God commands are saved by grace.

Paul tells us that it is hopeless to strive for justification through works.

"Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin . . . and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:20, 24). (NIV).

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13) (NIV).

This was the pure gospel that was preached unto Abraham.

"The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you'" (Gal. 3:8). (NIV).

There are those who would try to convince us that we are no longer obligated to keep the law and who teach that once we have been justified there is no more sin and that we are free to do what we please. But we refer once again to Paul's words in Rom. 6:1, 2:

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died in sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (NIV).

Christ said in most unmistakable language that he did not come to change the law:

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17). (NIV).

Jesus, the inspiration of all Scripture, inspired Isaiah to write:

"It pleased the Lord for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious" (Isa. 42:21, NIV).

David found great delight in keeping the law of God through the power of the Holy Spirit:

"Then I said, 'Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. To do your will, O my god, is my desire; your law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:7, 8, NIV).

The question is often asked—Was the law nailed to the cross?

G. Campbell Morgan says: "Man . . . needs to be solemnly reminded that the law of the spirit of life in Christ sets him free from the law of sin and death, but not from the law of God."—Revell 1901 ed. p. 12.

What was nailed to the cross? (See Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14).

It was the law of ordinances or ceremonial law given to the Jewish Church by the inspired testimony of Moses. Many of these laws were given to govern the services of the church in the wilderness. Others had to do with the sacrificial system that pointed to the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (See Rev. 13:8). The millions of lambs slain in the sacrificial system over the hundreds of years in the history of the Jews all pointed to the cross of Calvary. When Jesus died, type met antitype. The slaughter of lambs

in the outer court of the temple had pointed to this dramatic moment, when God came down in human flesh and died for the sins of the world. When the temple veil was rent in two, the sacrificial system, the law of Moses, no longer had meaning or significance.

To say that Christ came down to earth to do away with the law, to establish the gospel is foolishness. If God could do so by divine faith, there was no reason for Christ to come. The gospel is the same today, yesterday and forever (see Heb. 13:8). Jesus is that Gospel. He gave the plan of salvation to Adam and Eve after sin came to this world. He gave the same everlasting gospel to Abraham and all his children once and for all times. The gospel has never changed. The gospel simply teaches that humans can never be saved *in* sin, but will be saved *from* sin (see Matt. 1:21). The good news is that Jesus became sin for us and that we *can* overcome sin by His power. (See Rom. 6:14, 18). Only those who conquer sin will sit with Jesus on His throne in glory.

“To him that overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne” (Rev. 3:21). (NIV).

To summarize, then, if the perfect law of God could be changed in any way, there would be no need for Christ to die and no need for judgment. (2 Cor. 5:10). But, the Bible is clear, all must stand before the Judge of the universe.

If God could change the law that portrays His very character, then God Himself would not be changeless. But the Scriptures teach that He changes not and with Him there is no variableness or shadow of turning. (James 1:17) The fact that the law was unchangeable plus His love for those who had broken that perfect law sent Christ to Calvary. Instead of doing away with the law, Calvary makes the law eternally obligatory.

Hear the conclusion of the entire matter in the words of the beloved John: “We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands . . . Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 John 2:3, 6 NIV).

8. IS SUNDAY THE SEVENTH-DAY?

The Sabbath was made holy, blessed, and set apart to be kept. Adam and Eve were only one day old when they kept the first Sabbath. The first full day that they spent on earth involved a celebration of their God and Creator. The same seventh day is still to be devoted for that purpose. It is for our benefit, not God's. Jesus said, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:27, 28).

The Sabbath was to be a perpetual memorial of the Creation, a day on which humans would always remember their Creator. Who was the Creator? Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:1, 2).

It is thrilling to realize that Jesus is the Creator of our world, the Lord of the Sabbath day, the one who made the Sabbath for man. We see him participating in human affairs throughout the Old Testament. He was the Visitor beneath the trees at Abraham's camp at the plains of Mamre. We see the Lord of the Sabbath at a place called Bethel, at the top of Jacob's ladder. We find Him in the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day in the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel (1 Cor. 10:1-4). He rained down manna from the cloud every morning except on His Sabbath day—when none fell. Christ worked a double miracle every week, for Friday, the preparation day, a double amount fell and then on the seventh day there was none. Christ, the prophesied Messiah, who would one day become a human being in order to live and die for the human family, was teaching the world the importance of His Holy Sabbath one month before Mr. Sinai and the giving of the commandments (Compare Ex. 16:1 with 19:1).

He spoke at Sinai the words, "Remember the Sabbath day" and then wrote them with His own finger: "And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18).

He emphasized the significance of the Sabbath with His words "Remember"

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Ex. 20:8-11).

The Sabbath, from the time of Creation to the time of the apostles, was a day for worship. Listen to the ongoing testimony of the Old Testament:

"Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." (Ex. 31:16-17).

"The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure, they stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness" (Ps. 111:7, 8).

God's people were to keep the Sabbath forever, as a sign of their love and devotion to their Creator and Redeemer. This is worship. And this worship on the seventh day Sabbath was to continue through everlasting ages—eternity. Isaiah tells us so.

"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 66:22, 23).

What was our Lord's relationship to the Sabbath when He came to our world?

"And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read" (Luke 4:16).

It was His *custom* to keep the Sabbath that He instituted in the very beginning of time. The first day of the week is mentioned only eight times in the New Testament. Six of these refer to the resurrection. These texts can be found in Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19. None of them say anything about a change of the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday. In fact, Luke, writing many years later about these events calls the seventh day "The sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56).

The disciples and many others gathered together in the upper room on the first day of the week. Mary went to the tomb to see that the Lord's body was properly cared for according to the custom of that time and found that He was not there. He had risen.

But nothing is said about the day of Christ's resurrection becoming a day of worship. The men and women who figure in that story were hiding in the upper room because of their fear of the Jews. We read in John 20:19:

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

We then have three Sabbaths which he kept in the 13th chapter and three in the 17th chapter and 78 in the 18th chapter. The fact that the Gentiles attended these meetings shows that it was a Christian rather than Jewish Sabbath observance.

If Jesus had changed the day of worship to the first day at His resurrection, Paul would have known it and would have clearly declared the change. He spent a lot of time and effort discussing changes in the ceremonial law. Think of how much *more* emphasis he would have had to give to a change in the fourth commandment if there had been such. This applies also to the other disciples. What a responsibility they must bear if they knew about a change of the Sabbath and never informed the churches about such a significant change. (Of course, there just could not be a change in God's unchangeable law.)

Some say that the apostles later celebrated communion on Sunday and therefore it had to be a day of worship. But, Acts 2:46 says they "broke bread" daily.

The last text of the eight that refer to the first day of the week is found in 1 Cor. 16:2:

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Nothing in this text mentions keeping a holy day. In fact, it does just the opposite. It was to be a day for settling accounts and taking stock of business matters rather than a substitute Sabbath.

Paul was a careful Sabbath-keeper. Eighty-four times in the book of Acts the record states that he kept the Sabbath. The references beginning in Acts 13:14, 42, 44:

"...and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. ...and when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath... And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

Notice that both Jews and Gentiles were worshipping on the Sabbath. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures." (Acts 17:2).

It was Paul's *custom* (as it was the Lord's) to worship on the Sabbath. We find a record of his doing so on three consecutive seventh-day Sabbaths.

"And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks... And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (Acts 18:4, 11).

Paul resided in the city of Corinth for 18 months. There he kept 78 Sabbaths.

Jesus was a Sabbath keeper and so were all the apostles. If anyone has a question about which day to keep, the answer is simple—just follow the example of Jesus and the apostles.

Whose example are those who worshipping on Sunday, the first day of the week, following? Man's example. The Catholic church does not hesitate to claim that they changed the day and that it is a mark of their religious authority that Protestants recognize this change. Listen to these words by a church historian, Rev. T. H. Moser in his book *Six Dialogues on the Lord's Day*:

"It is not to be denied, but we borrow the name of this day from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and we allow that the old Egyptians worshipped the sun, and as a standing memorial of their veneration, dedicated this day to him. And we find by the influence of their examples, other nations, and among them the Jews themselves doing him homage; yet these abuses did not hinder the Fathers of the Christian Church simply to repeal, or altogether lay by, the day or its name, but only to sanctify and improve both, as they did also the pagan temples polluted before the idolatrous services, and other instances wherein those good men were always tender to work any other change than what was evidently necessary, and in such things as were plainly inconsistent solemnly adored that planet, and called it Sunday, partly from its influence on that day especially, and partly in respect to its divine body (as they conceived it), the Christians thought fit to keep the same day and same name of it, that they might not appear causelessly peevish, and by that means hinder the conversion of the Gentiles, and bring a great prejudice than might be otherwise taken against the gospel."—pp. 22, 23.

Listen to the words of Rev. Peter Giermann, from *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, which on January 25, 1910, received the 'apostolic Blessing' of Pope Pius X. On this subject of the change of the Sabbath, this catechism says:

"Question Which is the Sabbath day?

"Answer Saturday is the Sabbath day.

"Question Why do we observe Sunday instead of Saturday?

"Answer We observe Sunday instead of Saturday because the Catholic Church, in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 336), transferred the solemnity from Saturday to Sunday.—Second edition p. 50."

History proves that many people kept the seventh-day Sabbath through dark and middle ages when the true church was in the wilderness experience

outlined in Rev. 12:14. Some theologians would have us believe that no one knows which day is the seventh day. If this were true, no one would know which day was the first day, either. But the Jews have kept every Sabbath since Christ was here and they still worship on Saturday.

Listen to Alexander Campbell, the founder of "Christian Church". In his popular lectures, he states:

"Heaven left not this fact, the creation, the basis of a thousand volumes, to be gathered from abstract reasonings, vitiated traditions, ingenious analogies, or plausible conjectures, but from a monumental institution which was as universal as the annals of time, as the birth of nations, and as the languages spoken by mortals. An institution, too, which, notwithstanding its demands, not only of the seventh part of all time, but of the seventh day in uninterrupted succession, was celebrated from the creation to the deluge, during the deluge, and after the deluge, till the giving of the law."—p. 283, 284.

What do the Presbyterians have to say about the continuity of the seven-day cycle:

"The division of time into weeks is not only non-natural, but in a sense contra-natural, since the week of seven days is no subdivision of either the naturally measured month or year. Yet this singular measure of time by periods of seven days may be traced not only through the sacred history before the era of Moses, but in all ancient civilizations of every era, many of which could not possibly have derived their notion from Moses... Among the learned of Egypt, the Brahmans of India, by Arabs, by Assyrians, as may be gathered from their astronomers and priests, this division was recognized. Hesiod (900 B.C.) declares the seventh day is holy... Even in the Saxon mythology, the divisions by weeks is prominent. Nay, even among the tribes of devil worshippers in Africa, we are told that a peculiar feature of their religion is a weekly sacred day, the violation of which by labor will incur the wrath of the devil god. Traces of a similar division of time have been noticed among the Indians of the American continent. Now, on what other theory are these facts explicable than upon the supposition of a divinely ordained Sabbath at the origin of the race?"—*Bound Tracts*, Vol. XII, pp. 5-7.

Again, from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

"The week is a period of seven days, having no reference whatever to the celestial motions—a circumstance to which it owes its unalterable uniformity... It has been employed from time immemorial in almost all Eastern countries; and as it forms neither an aliquot part of the year nor

of the lunar month, those who reject the Mosaic recital will be a loss, as Delambre remarks, to assign to it an origin having much semblance of probability."—Eleventh edition, Vol. IV, p. 988, art. "Calendar."

God's Holy Sabbath is part of His unchangeable law. Jesus' words "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love", certainly include keeping the fourth commandment. (John 15:10). Jesus adds: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). The New Testament Scriptures tell us that the commandments were the guide for the early Christian Church. It was not until the third and fourth centuries A.D. that the *church* officially changed the keeping of the Seventh-day Sabbath to the first day of the week—Sunday?

A popular TV evangelist recently stated that people who keep the seventh day are in doctrinal error, "It is a hindrance to many people's spiritual and scriptural understanding... Actually neither the Lord nor any apostle commanded that we keep the old Jewish Sabbath."

How strange that men who set themselves up as spiritual leaders can be so ignorant of the Scriptures to which they claim to adhere and love! What does the Bible say to those who make such claims?

"And hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3,4).

The seventh-day Sabbath was instituted in the beginning, at the creation of this world, and thus is as old as history.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Gen. 2:1-3).

Remember that God has never forgotten the day that He blessed and made holy. It was set apart from the other six days to be kept sacred throughout all remaining time. In summary, Jesus said:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3,4).

The Sabbath commandment is at the very heart of all the ten. If we do away with one, we do away with all. If we truly love God, we will worship on the day He designates no matter what those about us do.

9. WHAT IS THE MARK OF THE BEAST?

Many in the Christian world in recent years have discussed this topic and come up with a multitude of answers for this question. One church believes one way, another faith teaches something else. How can we know for certain what the mark referred to in Rev. 14:9 (NIV) is all about?

"A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.'"

In Rev. 13:15, 16 we are told that the people of every class and race will receive this mark in their foreheads (minds) and in their hands.

In the 16th chapter of Revelation verse 2, this mark is used to designate who will receive the seven last plagues. In Rev. 19:19, 20 we are told that the beast, the leaders of the world who have fought against God, along with the false prophet and with those that they have deceived who now have this mark, all will be destroyed in the lake of fire:

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27, NIV).

Nothing that defiles the character (mind) of man a well as the body, will enter into the presence of god.

If those who receive this mark will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord, then it must be important; if we want to do God's will and be saved for eternity, to know what this mark is, then certainly it is God's responsibility to make it clear to us.

The seventh chapter of Daniel begins by recounting a dream Daniel received from God. There were four beasts in this dream that represent four kings (See Dan. 7:17), they represent Babylon, the lion; Media-Persia, the bear, Greece, the leopard, and Pagan Rome, the terrible beast with the ten horns. The ten horns represent the division of pagan Rome into 10 kingdoms. Time and space does not allow us to go into a detailed study here of these beasts and horns, but let us look at the 20th verse and the ten horns or the divisions of Rome. These can be listed as the Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Burgundians, Heruli, Anglo-Saxons, and the Lombards (See Uriah Smith, *Daniel and Revelation*, p. 58). The Book of Daniel adds:

"I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the

other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully... The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings” (Dan. 7:20, 24, NIV).

Out of these ten was to appear upon the world scene another horn different from the others. It had eyes like a man and a mouth speaking great words. Verse 21 says that he successfully fought against God’s people. This little horn or power that was to arise was different from the others and had the ability to conquer three other kings or powers in the world. Verse 21 adds: “As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them.” This power would assume the power of God by speaking great things against God. It also would be a persecuting power against God’s true church and would attempt to change the law of God. It would be able to do all these things for a time, times, and a dividing of times. A “time” represents a year, so the total is 1260 days. The same period is referred to in Rev. 12:6 and Rev. 11:3. Rev. 13:5 and 11:2 also refer to this time period as 42 months. In Rev. 12:14 this prophetic period is referred to as a time, times, and a half time.

What is the prophetic period all about? It is very important. If we are to understand the mark of the Beast we need to understand the meaning of this prophetic time period.

Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 states that a day represents a year in prophecy. There are 30 days in a Jewish calendar month. Thus, we understand that a one thousand, two hundred and three score days makes up 1260 years. Forty-two months, using the 30-day month also equals 1260 years. The term “a time” is considered by Bible commentators to mean a year. So, times would be two years and dividing of times would be half a year. In calculating we would see then that 30 days x 12 months makes a total of 360 days. 2 “times” equals 720 days, and half a year added ($6 \times 30 = 180$) makes a total of 1260 days. The prophetic periods are expressed in a variety of ways, but they all point to the time when a persecuting power would do terrible things to God’s church for this long period of time.

The beast of Rev. 13 must represent the same power as the little horn of Dan. 7:24. In Rev. 13:4-8 the beast has the same characteristics as outlined in Dan. 7; he blasphemes God, or speaks words against the Most High, he makes war with the saints or God’s people, and he is allowed to do this for 1260 prophetic days or years.

Who is this power? Who in history attempted to change the law of God, persecuted fellow Christians, and attempted to set himself up as god in this world?

History does not leave any doubt. Just ask the protestant reformers.

Apostasy in Christ's church began soon after the apostles began to pass from the scene of action. Paul tells us that this power already was beginning to make its appearance in his day:

"Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, and even sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God . . . For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way" (2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 7, NIV).

Paul marvels that the believers in Galatia have already began to believe a false gospel (Gal. 1:6, 7).

He also predicts that "wolves" would enter the church after his death (Acts 20:29).

John refers to the false doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15). By the way, the Nicolaitans taught that the law of God could not be kept.

So we see that apostasy began to creep into the Christian church early in its experience.

At the time of Constantine, Emperor of Pagan Rome, the church was beginning to enter what is portrayed as the wilderness experience in Rev. 12:14. Members of the Christian church were sacrificed by the thousands by such Emperors as Hadrian, Diocletian, and Theodosius. Many were thrown to lions in the amphitheaters of Rome, crucified, and then lighted as human torches for the games. But for every Christian that died there were 10 to take his place. So persecution only multiplied the believers. Because Constantine realized that killing them would not stamp out the faith of God's saints he decided to compromise with Christianity. The pagan church was amalgamated with the Christian by order of the emperor. The pagans worshipped the sun god Mithra and pagan feast days were introduced and given new names. Christmas and Easter are two examples. Most knowledgeable people recognize that Christ was not born on Dec. 25. That day was kept in honor of the winter solstice.

Persecution ceased in Rome. Families were allowed to return to their farms, shops, and crafts. There was peace for a time, but the church began to relax and compromises began to creep in. A new generation was born that had not known persecution. Then suddenly, as a flash of lightning across the sky, a change came with the Council of Laodicea in 364 A.D., which forbade the Christians to worship on the Christian Sabbath, the seventh day. For some time many had been keeping both the seventh day and the first day. Now seventh day keeping was proscribed officially.

The devil had finally found the weapon to destroy the church of Christ—compromise. Again persecution began to rage, but this time under the cloak of piety and religion.

The next two hundred years were tragic ones for the Christian church. The apostasy was now complete. Hundreds of pagan temples now became Christian churches. The images and candles that were part of the pagan worship had been retained to keep from offending the converts to Christianity. Images, of course, had been renamed and now carried the names St. John, St. Paul, and St. Peter, among others. The simple conduct and dress of Christ and the disciples was replaced by garish robes and ceremonies. The virgin goddesses of the heathen were now renamed the Virgin Mary. The apostasy was nearly complete. Only one more thing remained—it was to make this man of sin to speak as God (See 2 Thess. 2:3; Dan. 7:25).

In the 6th century A.D., the Emperor Justinian gave the beast, the little horn, the power to act as God. The emperor moved his throne from Rome to Constantinople, leaving the Bishop of Rome in charge of this important part of his kingdom—Rome.

To fully understand what happened we need to go back and see how this decision was made.

The emperors of Rome had a jurisprudence similar to the judicial system of the United States. In fact, much of our judicial system can be traced back to the Romans and the linkage of Christianity to paganism. The emperors were faced with the problem of appeals, for the final appeal was to the emperor. That was Paul's right as a Roman citizen, you'll remember. When Christianity and the Roman government were united, these appeals were over church matters and religion, as well as civil issues. The emperors had to call upon the leaders of the church to help them pass judgment on such appeals. It was only natural, then, that the Bishop of Rome would become a dominant religio-political figure in the emperors' cabinets. The Bishop was highly educated and qualified. Justinian eventually chose the Bishop of Rome to oversee the matters of the kingdom.

The codes of Justinian set up the machinery for the Bishop of Rome to become the pope and for the Catholic church to become sovereign in both politics and religion. In the year 538 A.D. the power of the Pope became absolute in Rome. The 1260 prophetic days or years had begun.

For the next 1260 years, occasional reigns of terror broke out within the Christian church. That's why Revelation 12:14 pictures the church fleeing to the wilderness to preserve the pure teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Such people as the Waldenses literally fled to the mountain valleys and caves of northern Italy in an attempt to preserve their religious freedom.

Others, such as the French Huguenots, were tortured and burned in the name of Christianity. Finally, from the 14th through the 18th century, a period of reformation occurred. Like shooting stars the great Reformers blazed across the sky to illuminate the night of darkness in the church. Wycliff, Zwingli, Huss, Jerome, Luther, Knox, and Wesley identified the man of sin, the little horn power of Daniel 7; the persecuting power of Rev. 12 and 13, as the pope of Rome, the antichrist.

To counter these movements the Inquisition raged and millions went to martyr's graves. The Council of Trent met for 18 years to find a theology that would get the reformationists to stop identifying the Pope as anti-christ. Futurism was created by the pen of Christopher Ribera and today has been embraced by many Protestant churches under the teaching of the secret rapture, which puts the coming of the antichrist at the end time rather than during the 1260 years.

We have identified the beast from Bible prophecy. Now what is the mark of the beast? Before we can answer that we must discuss the mark of God—His seal. The seal used by a king was his mark of authority (See Dan. 6:8). All the official documents of the Kingdom were sealed with it. (See 1 Kings 2:8 and Esther 3:12).

Three important elements make up a seal: 1) The lawgiver's name; 2) his position-title and authority; 3) his dominion and the extent of his jurisdiction.

The fourth commandment of the law of God clearly reveals these three elements of authority:

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy) (Ex. 20:8-11, NIV).

Study carefully this most neglected and misunderstood commandment. Notice that "in six days" 1) "The Lord"—NAME, 2) "Made" Office—CREATOR, 3) "Heaven and earth"—HIS DOMINION. This commandment contains the *seal* of God. This commandment is a sign between God and man forever. (See Ex. 31:17; Ezek. 20:20). This holy, special day made at the creation of the world (Gen. 2:1-3) is the same special day which men will celebrate in eternity. (Isa. 66:22, 23).

The Sabbath is not only the sign of God's creative power but of His redemptive power, for redemption is re-creation.

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10, NIV).

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10, NIV).

Just before the coming of the Lord Jesus to this world the second time, the Bible teaches that God's true, peculiar, and holy people will be sealed with the seal of the living God (see Rev. 7:2, 3).

In Ezek. 9:1-6 God commands this sealing angel to do his work and begin at the sanctuary or church. So, all who have embraced the name Christian will be judged (2 Cor. 5:10) and the law of God found in Ex. 20 will be the law by which God will judge. The law outlines the character of God. His character will be written on the minds of His people through loving obedience to all of His commands. The seal of God is not a visible one, but represents the settling of the mind and body and soul into the truth of God so that those who hold it dear can never be moved from their loving obedience to God. These saints have no guile, they are pure and holy. "No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless" (Rev. 14:5, NIV).

And the keeping of the Sabbath will be the special outward indication of the fact that God has taken complete control of their lives and written His law upon their hearts.

Since the Sabbath is God's sign, it is then the sign of God's people against whom the devil is angry. He goes forth to persecute the church that keeps the seventh-day Sabbath and has the faith of Jesus:

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17, NIV).

Now that we have established God's mark we should be able to quickly discover what the mark of the beast is.

"A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: 'If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of His wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb'" (Rev. 14:9, 10, NIV).

If the beast or the little horn of Dan. 7 and Rev. 13 is the papacy, the Roman church, the apostate church of the 1260 years, it must have received a deadly wound, and yet did live. In 1798 Napoleon sent his general, Berthier, into the Vatican and took the pope captive. The 1260 years came to an end. The pope no longer had civil authority.

“One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast” (Rev. 13:3, NIV).

But this beast is to be restored to power and authority in another form by the second beast of Rev. 13 who has horns like a lamb and represents a country coming up not out of the sea, (water is symbolic of people. See Rev. 17:15) but where there are very few people. Many commentators see this as representing the birth of the USA, a country largely uninhabited when it was first formed and where religion is protected by its constitution.

But this beast in the future will make an image to the first beast:

“He exercised all the authority of the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast on his behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed” (Rev. 13:12 NIV).

What did the first beast do? He made war with the true church who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. The first beast is the persecuting power of the little horn of Dan. 7:24 and the second beast of Rev. 13:11 causes the world to repeat what the first beast did during the 1260 years when it spake as a dragon. One thing it will do is attempt to confirm the action of the first beast that tried to change the Bible Sabbath to Sunday.

Remember Sunday originally was a pagan feast day. There is absolutely no authority in the Bible for worshipping on the first day of the week. In the last chapter we showed that eight times the first day is mentioned in the New Testament—but none of these texts indicate that it was made a holy or sanctified day. The Catholic church then changed, and admits that it changed, the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday.

Let us read from the following Catholic documents:

“Question: How prove you that the Church hath power to command feasts and holydays?

“Answer: By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of.”—Henry Tuberville, *An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine* (1833 approbation), p. 58.”

“The observance of sunday by the Protestants is an homage they pay, in spite of themselves, to the authority of the (Catholic) church.”—

Monsignor Louis Segur, *Plain Talk About the Protestantism of Today* (1868), p. 213.”

As God's Day is His mark—His seal, so Sunday is the mark of the beast—his sign of authority. When intelligent people have had the opportunity to make a decision to accept the truth of the commandments of God and His Sabbath, but refuse to give their allegiance to God, preferring to obey the commandments of men instead, they also receive an invisible mark in their foreheads (minds). Because they intelligently make a decision to continue to dishonor God's law by setting aside His Holy Sabbath, and substituting a man-made day, they have received an invisible mark in their hand.

But notice this is only when they are conscious of doing so. Many fine Christians today unwittingly worship on the substitute Sabbath without realizing why they keep that day instead of the Bible Sabbath. *No one yet* has the mark of the beast. But the fourteenth chapter of Revelation points to a time when this issue will become a universal and dominant one—and all people everywhere will understand the issue and demonstrate which side their hearts are on by their loyalty to the seal of their Creator or the mark of rebellion.

What a day is just before us when the saints of God will obtain the victory over the beast and His mark and the number of his name.

"And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name" (Rev. 15:2, NIV).

10. THE FOUR BABYLONS

The Book of Revelation speaks of the fall of Babylon, "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of wrath of her fornication." (Rev. 14:8).

This message proclaims the fall of Babylon. What is Babylon? Of course we know that Babylon was an ancient city which was in ruins in John's day. In the Babylonian language, Babylon meant "gate of the gods." But the word in the Hebrew meant "to confuse". The city of Babylon was founded by Nimrod (see Gen. 10:10; 11:3-9). From its beginning Babylon was the center of rebellion against God.

"Babylon is a comprehensive term that John employs to describe all religious bodies and movements that have fallen away from truth. This fact requires us to view this 'fall' as progressive and cumulative.

"This prophecy of the fall of Babylon finds its fulfillment in the departure of Protestantism at large from the purity and simplicity of the gospel (see Rev. 14:4)... The message will have increasing relevance as the end draws near, and will meet its complete fulfillment with the union of the various religious elements under the leadership of Satan (see on chs. 13:12-14; 17:12-14). The message of Ch. 18:2-4 announces the complete downfall of Babylon and calls upon God's people who are scattered throughout the various religious bodies comprising Babylon, to separate from them." (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, VII:830).

First Babylon, The Tower of Babel

Nimrod, a great hunter, general, and tyrannical leader, built the first skyscraper. The great apostate, the father of lies, inspired Nimrod with great ambition to rule the world, and to unify the whole world in rebellion against God. Satan then could declare himself as the god of this earth on the sides of the north.

"For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isa. 14:13-14.)

Nimrod attempted to deprive the postdiluvians of their inherent right to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience (see Gen. 10:8-10, 11:1-10). He determined to dominate both the souls and bodies of all men. He was a great antagonist, or rival of God.

But God came down to view this mighty architecture. Jagged lightning flashed, the earth heaved, and mighty tower of Babel fell. All those who would be Babel builders, who would presume to be conscience for another, fight God, and Babel towers always fall.

Kingdom of Babylon

This Babylon is introduced in Daniel 4:30, "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" This pictures Nebuchadnezzar drunk with his success in conquering the world. Looking out over his beautiful hanging gardens to the plains below, intoxicated with an exaggerated sense of self importance, he cries out, "This great Babylon that I have built."

He would not accept Daniel's interpretation of his dream, Babylon would stand forever. He built a great image on the plains of Dura, a replica of his dream. This would symbolize his kingdom's perpetuity, and he decreed the whole world to worship this image of Babylon. He would countenance no exceptions.

The three worthies standing fearlessly on the plains of Dura for their commitment to the God of heaven destroyed the symbol of the image. If he could, Satan would force all to forsake God or suffer cremation alive.

The personage of Christ in the fiery furnace with the three courageous young Hebrews, forever destroyed Nebuchadnezzar's dream of an everlasting kingdom. In all succeeding generations the world has applauded the saga of God's deliverance.

Babylon the great would fall, and for this purpose God brought Cyrus with his army to the city's gates. "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;" (Isa. 45:1).

Papal Babylon

The spirit of Babylon has been present in every generation. The prophet Daniel saw through the gift of divine inspiration the rise and fall of kingdoms, four beasts designated four world empires. But he saw a little horn power rise up among the ten horns which was different from its fellows. It would be a persecuting power; it would assume the power of God on earth, to blaspheme the name of God. It would assume the right to change God's commandments. And it would use the power to do these terrible things against God's people for 1,260 years.

"I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it

into pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." (Daniel 7:21-25).

The church would be forced to retreat into wilderness hiding places because of this persecuting little horn power. Millions testified with their blood refusing to compromise conscience for their faith in Jesus during the 1260 years (538 A.D. to 1798 A.D.) reign of this religio-political super power.

The history books confess this tragic era in which it is stated by some historians fifty million died by the decrees of the little horn. Only one power in the world fits the description: the papcy, or the Roman Catholic Church.

It seemed that during this great reign of terror, that the true church would not survive. But safely hidden in the Swiss, Italian, and French Alps and other places of the earth, the wilderness church survived the onslaught of the crusades, the inquisition, and the great massacre of St. Bartholomew by this great persecuting super power. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt 24:22). For the elect's sake God shortened the days of papal persecution.

In 1798, Napoleon sent his general, Berthier, to the Vatican and took the pope captive. The little horn power was broken. The deadly wound was given by the atheistic government of France and persecution of the church of god ceased.

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his head the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." (Rev 13:1-3).

Papal Babylon fell, but would rise again before the end. The deadly wound would be healed. And again the world would be forced to wonder after the Little Horn power.

Protestant Babylon

Through the protestant reformers, God planned to turn Papal Babylon back into the pure church of the Apostles. Wycliff raised his voice and pen for reform. He was joined in time by others—Zwingli, Luther, Knox and finally the Wesleys.

The papal church fought back with the inquisition, the society of the Jesuits, and the Council of Trent. Persecution raged, the blood of the saints flowed freely in the reign of holy terror. Protestantism was born. Spirit inspired, Christ centered, Bible based, and highly favored of God, she had all the earmarks of becoming Christ's spiritual bride.

But as the reformers passed off the scene of action, the reformed churches retreated. Instead of advancing to complete the reformation as God wanted, bringing the churches all the way back to the apostolic faith, to the pure doctrine of the Bible, on the Sabbath and the nonimmortality of the soul, the reformed churches concerned themselves with other interests, civic betterment, and a social gospel, or community involvement. They were gradually caught up in secular and political issues, rather than the spiritual. An overemphasis upon the temporal brought politics into religion, and in some countries of Europe, the state supported the church. Some of the early American colonies began by a state-church relationship. Then Rev. 14:8 charges Protestantism with making "all nations drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

The popular Evangelical churches, some from behind their T.V. pulpits week after week teach nonscriptural Bible doctrines. They propagate Satan's lies. Such as the idea that man does not really die, but his spirit remains conscious and understands all that is going on in the world, when the Bible teaches that in death man's thoughts perish and also every emotion (see Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10; Ps. 146:3, 4).

Also as daughters of the Papacy, Protestant churches have accepted the illegitimate child of Romanism, the Sunday Sabbath. Not one text exists to show Sunday is holy, blest, or sanctified (see Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 30:1,2; Ezek. 20: 20). By imposing these two doctrinal errors upon the world, Protestants and Catholics have become Babylon.

While the fundamentalist right wing has cried, The Bible and Bible only, the liberals on the other side, the popular modern pulpits with their electronic, sophisticated, psychology oriented, PhD preachers, housed in multimillion dollar cathedrals with theatrical voices, have regulated their audience's spiritual interests into secondary importance, by excessive involvement in social affairs. The so-called Christian Babylon has jilted her Suitor and has fallen. Her deterioration continues. The liberal church declares evolution to be God's way of creation and makes the creation story a myth.

Higher criticism has cast aspersions on the virgin birth and vicarious sacrifice in Christ's atonement. Christianity's constant flirtation with modernism and liberalism denies the inspiration of the Bible. A few years ago our hearts were chilled as the liberals cried, God is dead. Can the nominal liberal churches sink lower?

Man is incurably religious. He must worship a god of some sort. History shows he will even deify the state.

In the very near future, we believe and prophecy foretells, church and state will unite in our own freedom-loving America. Legislation will be passed to inaugurate Sunday as a sacred day of worship. Ecumenism will persecute those who dare to keep holy the seventh-day Sabbath instead of Sunday.

The Beast of Revelation 13:11-18 causes the world to imitate everything the Little Horn power did during the 1260 years of papal persecution. This develops an image to the Beast. The time of trouble spoken of in Daniel 12:1 takes place under the direction of the fallen churches. When fallen Protestantism unites with Catholicism and spiritualism and is sponsored by the authority of legislation, we know that our country has renounced its belief in the first amendment of our constitution. And this national apostasy will be followed by national ruin.

The spiritual condition of the popular churches is steadily worsening and apostasy will increase until these fallen ecclesiastical bodies become the "Hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." (Rev. 18:2). And the spirit of intolerance will quickly displace the spirit of religious liberty. Those who are keeping all ten of the commandments of God, by the Holy Spirit's power, will then discern the situation and will alert the world with the cry, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen." "Come out of her my people."

God's divine power will be like streams of light encircling our world with the message to stand loyal to God, and the entire world will hear it and will be enlightened with His glory in a second Pentecost.

11. WHAT IS TRUTH?

At the crucifixion Pilate made a feeble attempt to save Jesus. But the mob, under the direction of Satan and the High Priest, forced Pilate to yield to the screams of "Crucify Him!" Nevertheless, the bearing and conduct of this kingly Jew whom they called Jesus, gave Pilate great forebodings. For a moment Jesus' eyes had held Pilate in a trance. Blood trickled down the Saviour's face from the crown of thorns. Pain and weariness were etched upon His countenance. Yet His voice, clear and distinct responded to Pilate's conjecture: "You are a king, then!" with "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18:37, NIV).

Pilate spontaneously responded, "What is the truth?"—but he never waited to hear the Saviour's answer. If only he had waited, what a different story might have been written. Jesus could have preached His greatest sermon then and there, for He is the author of all truth. He had told His disciples: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

It was Jesus who inspired the prophets of old to write the truth.

"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21, NIV).

God inspired Scripture. It is intriguing to imagine what Jesus would have said if Pilate had allowed Him to give His sermon on truth that day.

But we don't have to imagine. In the Bible we can find truth about every important doctrine that is being taught in the churches today. We are told by Paul to:

"Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thess. 5:21, NIV). In 2 Tim. 3:16 (NIV) Paul adds: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

In our search for truth we can have confidence that what the Bible teaches is the inspired source of all truth.

With so many different churches saying so many different things, who has the truth? Isaiah gives us part of our answer:

"But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." (Isa. 28:13).

We must search and gather together all the evidence concerning every point of doctrine. "Line upon line, here a little and there a little." Then Jesus will

send the “spirit of truth” and “he shall teach you all things.” (See John 15:26; 14:26). Then you shall know the true doctrine. “If any one chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.” (John 7:17 NIV).

If Jesus had given His sermon in the judgment hall that day, I believe He would have talked about creation, for it was He who created the world in six literal days and rested on the seventh-day Sabbath. (Eph. 3:9; Gen. 1, 2). He possibly would have explained the sin problem that arose in heaven with Lucifer and the war that was fought in heaven and is still being fought today over the law of god. (See Rev. 12, Isa. 14 and Ezek. 28). He might have told Pilate about the sin of Adam and Eve, their breaking of the law of god and disgracing their Creator, and then how He gave them His great promise to come to this world in the form and nature of fallen human beings to prove to the universe that God’s law can be kept.

He might have explained to Pilate that salvation comes not by the works of man but by the miracle of transformation of character in the new birth experience. (See John 3, 2 Cor. 5:17). It is an act of God upon the soul when that soul desires more than anything else to be like Jesus.

Adam lost righteousness because he lost his trust in God and it is the faith of Jesus accepted into the daily life that produces and restores righteousness and gives power to keep the law of righteousness. (See Rev. 14:12; Gal. 2:16; Ps. 119:34, 11, 142; Rom. 3:22). So, when ours is the faith of Jesus we can be trusted with His righteousness and be restored to godlikeness. Then we will love as we were originally created to love, as God does. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, this experience can become a reality in the heart and life of every Christian who believes and obeys God’s law.

The Bible teaches that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). But God has a perfect standard—His perfect law—and He provides the power to conquer our hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil. He has made wonderful promises to those who are willing to be made willing to conquer to overcome in Christ. Millions have experienced this great miracle. His promise means what it says:

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on His throne” (Rev. 3:21, NIV).

Every professed Christian should be claiming these promises of victory, and remembering that: “I can do everything through Him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13, NIV).

God promises to keep us from falling: “To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy” (Jude 24, NIV).

Jesus’ unfolding of truth surely would have included the thought that salvation is for every man, woman and child who receives the Lord into his heart. That no one is predestined to be saved or lost. “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11, NIV).

God will not interfere with the human will. Our will is God’s greatest gift to us. It is left to us to choose our destiny (See Josh. 24:15).

If the author of all truth had been given the opportunity, He could have instructed Pilate that death was a sleep where there is no consciousness until the resurrection. (See John 11:11 and Eccl. 9:5, 6, 10). He would have made it plain that hell is not a place that is burning today and that will continue to torture the wicked eternally, but instead represents this world in the final conflagration in which all evil will be consumed, devoured, and annihilated everlasting.

“In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire” (Jude 7, NIV).

“They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them” (Rev. 20:9, NIV).

“‘Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and that day that is coming will set them on fire,’ says the Lord Almighty. ‘Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,’ says the Lord Almighty” (Mal. 4:1-3, NIV).

Probably Jesus would have dwelt the longest upon the subject of His second coming, for this is the greatest theme in the Bible outside of salvation itself. All Heaven now is in readiness for this dramatic event. He will not come secretly to gather a few and then the third time to resurrect many. But He will come like the lightning flashing across the heavens. (See Matt. 24:27). When He comes, a cloud of His glorious angels will accompany Him. (See Matt. 24:30-31). The wicked will be afraid and will try to hide from His glory. (See Rev. 6:14, 15). Then every eye around the entire earth will see Him. He will be seen as the earth rotates on its axis. (See Rev. 1: 7). You see, there is no Bible evidence for a secret rapture. When He comes, the righteous dead are raised to

immortal life. (See 1 Thess. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-54). They are then transported through space to the New Jerusalem to the Home of God where they will enjoy eternal life. One thousand years later, that great city will descend from heaven to earth with the Son and the Father, the saints, and the angels. After the final executive judgment of the devil and his angels with the billions they deceived, this world will be recreated to be the eternal home of God and the saints.

“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind” (Isa. 65:17, NIV).

Sin will never rise again, because God is love; His character has been vindicated before the universe. “Trouble will not come a second time” (Nah. 1:9, last part, NIV).

In the new earth, God’s laws and His holy Sabbath will be kept faithfully for eternity, for Jesus is the author of Sabbath:

“‘As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,’ declares the Lord, ‘so will your name and descendants endure. From one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,’ says the Lord” (Isa. 66:22, 23, NIV).

I promised that our search for truth would be exciting. You probably have learned much that is new to you. I pray that you will study carefully for yourself every Bible text mentioned in this book.

Now, you may want to ask the question, “Where do I find a church that teaches all these things. God had identifying marks for His true church in this last generation:

1. They teach all the truth of the Bible (John 17:17).
2. They keep all the commandments of God, including the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath. (Rev. 12:17)
3. They have the Testimony of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy. (Rev. 19:10)
4. They believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 4:11-13)
5. They are engaged in the world-wide proclamation of the Three Angels’ Messages found in Rev. 14:6-12.

The Seventh-day Adventist church is the church that meets this test. We invite you to study further and if you have questions you need answered, call your nearest Seventh-day Adventist Church or attend Saturday morning when they keep the Seventh-day Sabbath. You will be most welcome.

12. THE COMING ECONOMIC CRISIS AND HOW TO SURVIVE IT

What happened to the happy, carefree days after World War II when good wages in America were three dollars an hour and when there was only one car in the garage instead of the two that most Americans now have? Families still talked together over popcorn and homemade fudge on Saturday nights and went on picnics or drives in the country on Sunday.

What suddenly changed our easy-going way of life to one that is so complex? The answer may be found within ourselves, in our demand for things. Materialism has become our God. We demand bigger homes, later model cars, and nicer furniture than the neighbors have next door. Our sophistication also demands that our children be educated to the professions.

Obviously, we would not condemn these goals, if our motivation for what we are doing and accumulating was right. But is our motivation right? The last of the Ten Commandments says, "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. 20:17); however, our sophisticated materialistic pursuits make coveting popular. Television and media advertising encourage this, and we have come to believe that in order to be happy we must have those things we see or read about. Easy credit has also encouraged people to obtain things which they cannot now afford, but which they can "enjoy" while they make the "easy" monthly payments. Families using credit cards such as VISA or Master Charge spend 26 percent more than those without credit cards.

Our desperate desire for that which does not satisfy ultimately has made us slaves to the second pay check, and our homes have been robbed of their most important influence—the loving, tender care of a mother dedicated to raising her children in the careful but easy style that produced the kind of character which made America great.

Consequently, our own covetousness which has been encouraged by media advertising and the availability of easy credit, is responsible, at least in part, for the moral decline in the family unit and society; and for the economic crisis which exists in our nation today.

Retracing Our Economic History

It is startling to learn that there has been a depression every 54 years since the year 1700, and the year 1982 marked the 54th year since the last great depression. Perhaps the "recession" through which we are passing is just a foretaste of an even greater economic crisis to come. Just as the depression hit the farmers before it affected the cities in 1929, so the current depression among this nation's farmers could be used as an indicator of what is yet to come.

As we retrace our economic history from 1955 to 1965, we find that the money supply grew at an annual rate of only 2.5 percent. But since 1965, the money supply has grown at about 6 percent. From the mid-sixties prices began to soar.

From 1960 through 1964 inflation grew at an annual rate of 1.2 percent. But from 1965 through 1968 something began to happen to inflation. It doubled to 2.5 percent. The following three years it doubled again to more than 5 percent.

President Nixon stepped in to fight inflation in 1971 with price controls on wages, goods, and rents. That seemed to stop inflation for the next two years. But this artificial method only brought a strong reaction, for when price controls were removed in 1973, we instantly returned to the inflationary spiral, and inflation reached 12 percent.

Suddenly one morning in 1973 Americans awoke to gas lines. Arab sheiks had become aware that they had a commodity the world could not live without. People must drive cars and heat their homes. The price of gas suddenly jumped from 30 cents to 60 cents a gallon and kept on climbing until Americans now pay more than a dollar a gallon. Some countries pay from two to four dollars a gallon. Small third-world countries could no longer export enough goods to offset the cost of importing oil and food. In America, trade deficits began to spiral at an alarming rate.

To cope with these emergencies, the countries of the world, including our own, responded by printing more money. The resulting inflation turned the American economy from a beautiful symphony into a noisy brass band playing, "Happy Days Are Gone Forever."

By 1974, this country had entered a severe economic crisis. Soon credit was tightened to curb the 12 percent inflation rate. Within four months the country was catapulted into a severe recession. When credit was eased in 1976, our nation came out of the recession; but this artificial resuscitation caused inflation in our economy once more.

Since then interest rates have increased from 8 to 9 to 12 to 15 and even to 20 percent which has indeed slowed inflation. Unfortunately, as a result of our now sluggish economy, unemployment has greatly increased. The American automobile industry, which has been the stimulus for much of the rest of the economy in gas, oil, tires, batteries, spare parts, service and repairs, is down in production, affecting the rest of these subsidiary industries. Thousands of workers have been laid off. In Detroit and other large cities there are long unemployment lines. For every one percent in unemployment, there is a \$20 billion loss in taxes to the government.

Many economists and government officials admit that we are in a serious recession. Controlling inflation has not proven to be the answer, for the resulting high unemployment has caused low levels of productivity and has reduced the amount of tax dollars paid to the government.

In addition, Americans must now live with the results of the inflation which has occurred. The cost of homes and construction has doubled, and the average American young family's dream to own their own home has largely faded. The average medium compact car costing less than \$4,000 five years ago, now retails for more than \$8,000; and the average purchaser probably will pay nearly \$3,000 for interest over a four-year period.

A house built in 1970 has almost doubled in price, with the median house costing \$100,000 in Southern California. Building lots are now at least \$20,000 or more. Such prices as these have almost destroyed the housing and construction business, for the cost of housing has risen about twice as fast as consumer prices.

Alternatives To Recession

Former British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, in a speech to the Labor Party Conference, said, "We used to think that we could just spend our way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I tell you in all candor that that option no longer exists and that, insofar as it ever did exist, it only worked by injecting a bigger dose of inflation into the economy, followed by a higher level of unemployment. That is the history of the past twenty years."

Another world leader, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, talking to the International Socialist Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, stated that the countries of the world were destroying their economic structures by printing money.

Harry Brown, economist, comments: "If the Federal Reserve keeps printing money, we are going to have inflation. If we stop printing money, we are going to have depression. It's a hard choice, and there are no other options."

But there is another option—one we don't like—and that is total economic dictatorship. Wage and price controls on everything we buy and sell. If this option should become a reality, every commodity we bring into our homes, from toothpaste to toilet paper, to food, will have a government controlled price on it. It may seem frightening, but this option has nearly become a necessity.

Herbert Stein, a well-known economist and former chairman of the President's council of economic advisors, recently made this statement, "The political results now visible may be the end of the democratic process and the coming to power of a dictator who promises to end the terrible anxieties of super inflation by establishing a police state."

What a terrible thought! But what if it does become a reality? Napoleon, the Emperor of France, became a dictator because of the collapse of the French monetary system. Will history be repeated?

During the Weimar Republic after World War I, the German economy became a shambles. The government ran printing presses to print huge amounts of banknotes in an attempt to solve their economic problems. Then Hitler came upon the scene. The first time he ran for office he received just 12,000 votes. But, because of the deterioration of the German economy, the next time he ran for office 12 million people voted for him. Why? Because he promised them economic security.

Many Americans believe that dictatorship comes with the arrival of the Hitler-Mussolini type people on the political scene. But today's dictators do not necessarily wear Hitler mustaches nor scream "Heil." Often they are clean-shaven gentlemen wearing \$500 business suits who seek dictatorial powers over the people of the world in the name of public interest. They systematically are laying the foundations for economic dictatorship.

What about the Tri-Lateral Commission and the spector that sometimes is raised of an economic dictatorship? In recent years a vice-president of the United States was challenged because of his membership in this world organization. Their objectives purportedly are to bring the world under their domination. Membership is made up of the elite of banking, government, and business. These powerful men have the resources and power to influence elections and manipulate the stock market. There is an organization that could wield a powerful influence if economic dictatorship were to become a reality.

Dictatorships usually lead to tyranny, and this results in the people of the country involved becoming virtual slaves. Is America ready to go down the same path today? Some people, and even government officials, bury their heads in the sand pretending that the problems will go away if they ignore them or just keep spending and printing more money. Some people call those who are concerned "dooms dayers". Although much that appears here may seem startling and alarming, it nonetheless is factual.

The democratic processes do seem to be breaking down, and it is possible that in the near future economic controls will be the only answer to the growing dilemma facing the world. Congress has already given the President power to close banks in case of an emergency. If he exercised this power, our country would be at the President's mercy for survival.

Perilous Economic Problems

Welfare Programs—The poor and destitute must be helped, but is our present welfare system, with its abuses, designed or adequate to help those genuinely poor? In 1978 there were 25 million poor people in the United States. Those figures are not diminishing. From 1965 to 1975 the United States government increased its expenditures for welfare programs by \$209 billion to a staggering total of \$286.5 billion.

One of our problems is that we have been building a welfare state insidiously for two decades or more. Much of the funds went to people who were not deserving and for the salaries of government welfare workers, with the smallest portion of available funds actually reaching the needy poor.

We have come to the sad place where, if we should continue our present trend, the smaller part of the American working force will one day be supporting the majority of the population. Something has to happen! (These statements on welfare are based on Secretary of the Treasury William E. Simon's book *The Time for Truth* available in local book stores or libraries.)

Easy Credit and Advertising—The companion to printing more money in creating inflation is easy credit. VISA and Master Charge cards have become easy to obtain. Families using credit cards spend 26 percent more than do those without credit cards. Also, advertising increases the demand for goods and encourages credit purchasing. So easy credit and advertising have been used to stimulate the economy.

But apparently we have not considered the fact that we are making our economy grow through the use of a false stimulant—credit. Credit causes prices to rise, but even though the economy expands, production does not balance with the supply of money. When there is a limited supply of products and a greater supply of money, the cost of the products rises, and the result is inflated prices. Thus one major cause of inflation is the false stimulus of easy credit.

Unemployment—Currently the unemployment rate in America is approximately 10 percent. This figure does not include those who are not working, but have given up looking for work. A major cause for this was the rapid escalation of gas prices and the resulting demand by the American public for gas-saving compact cars. European and Japanese cars began to flood the market to meet America's needs, and the American automobile industry almost collapsed.

As many other industries are dependent on the automobile industry for their business—steel manufacturers, metal fabricators, parts, paints, and

materials manufacturers, etc.—these too have suffered. Thousands of workers have been laid off, with many running out of unemployment benefits.

Rural Population—In 1929 nearly 70 percent of the American population lived in a rural or semi-rural setting. Most had a large lot or an acre or more in which to raise a garden and chickens and possibly a cow. They put patches over patches on their clothes and with a few dollars a month were able to survive. But today's society is much different. Now nearly 70 percent of the nation's population dwells in the inner cities or in urban dwellings. Many live in condominiums or 20 floors up in apartments. The ghettos still are asphalt jungles following a decade of government failure in renewal programs. All that it would take to spark a revolt in this continued failing economy would be empty refrigerators and mealless tables for the masses of the poor.

Cities With Unbalanced Economies—The collapse of New York City's economic structure in 1975 was not a result of recession, but came as a result of the whole system getting out of balance. Many of the large cities in the United States and the world now face the same catastrophe. The collapse of New York City was only a dress rehearsal of what could happen to the economic structure of this nation and the world.

Enormous National Debt—What would happen if the government could no longer pay \$100 billion of yearly interest on the \$1 trillion national debt? Remember, Congress has given the President power to close banks in case of an emergency. Is it possible that the collapse of 1929 could be repeated? Some say there are now too many controls for that to happen, that the government now guarantees savings. But if the government goes broke, how will it be able to guarantee anything?

Perhaps the economy can be compared to a modern race car which requires expert mechanics to keep it running. The motor must be tuned daily, the car must be in top repair, and the tires must be changed constantly to prevent blowouts. Unfortunately, the best economy mechanics can't seem to get the motor tuned right; the car is in a constant state of disrepair, lacking replacement parts; and the tires keep blowing out.

Perilous Problems—If unemployment were able to climb past the 10 percent mark, shrinking the tax dollars paid to the government; and unemployment insurance should run out for millions of Americans; and if the social security system, already deeply in trouble, should fail and retirees and the aged find themselves without funds; and if the welfare system computers were no longer able to print checks for the needy, what then?

We would probably see revolution on a scale that this world has never seen. Our memory of tragic scenes of years past of Watts and Miami and New York where portions of cities were incinerated by angry mobs might turn into present reality.

Those who say 1929 could never happen again are not realists. Civilized, sane, thinking men and women today are frightened. Bankers and economists are fearful for what could happen. We are living in a terrifying moment of the world's history.

Our Day Predicted

The Bible has long predicted that perilous times are to be expected in the last days of this earth's history:

"The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess." Zeph. 1:14, 15.

"The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchman and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity. Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." Mic. 7:2-7.

The predictions are in the New Testament as well. From his dungeon cell the apostle Paul penned these words to Timothy, his son in the faith:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affections, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good. Traitors, heady, highminded,, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

This text may read like your newspaper or it might seem like what you hear when listening to the news on television. One thing is certain: we are living in the very last days of this world's history. Some people will say that generations of people have told their children this and yet still we are here, but the Bible is plain that in the last days such scoffers will exist:

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last day scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Pet. 3:1-7.

Most people in the world do not want God to interfere or intervene in the affairs of the world, and that's the way it was in Noah's day:

"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Gen. 6:11-13.

Jesus compared our time to Noah's and to Lot's day:

"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30.

Someone may ask, "Would the Bible predict a major economic crisis?"

Absolutely.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7.

No major catastrophe has ever taken place in our world that God did not first send a warning. The New Testament has this challenging word for those of us living in the last days:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in the day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." Jas. 5:1-6.

These prophetic words penned over 1900 years ago tell of strife in the last days between capital and labor and predict that people will store up great wealth, and that the working man will be robbed of his wages. They predict that the world will be living in great luxury at the time of the end, but also indicate that all these riches will come to nothing.

The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, foretold 2500 years ago that in the last days of the world's history people would cast their gold and silver and wealth to the bats and moles (Isaiah 2:20).

Without a doubt, we face the time so accurately predicted in the Bible. The devil's last effort to control the world and its people will be through control of the economy. The last book of the Bible states it this way:

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in the foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Rev. 13:16,17.

The mark in the forehead and in the hand is NOT a visible mark—it comes when the people make an intelligent decision to honor laws that violate the laws of God. All governments will try to force people everywhere to receive this "mark." The "mark" that the Bible predicts will control buying and selling will be an international law dealing with economics. When the law becomes effective, we will be living under an absolute dictatorship—not military, but economic.

The Bible is an international book. It was written for all the people of the world. As we realize that the mark of the beast predicted in Revelation has something to do with world-wide economic control, we also need to realize that loss of economic freedom means loss of political and religious freedom.

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